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ADELA NORTHINGTON,

1263

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Sirfojee Rajah

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. CAWTHORNE, BRITISH LIBRARY,
STRAND.

1796.

ADELA NORTHINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Tale.

"ADIEU, dear native ſpot! adieu, ſweet haunts of innocence, and pure delight! ever ſacred will your remembrance be to her, whom neceſſity now compels to quit your embowering ſhades, and mix in thoſe tumultuous ſcenes, ſo eagerly wiſhed for by the generality of mankind."

Such were the plaintive effuſions that fell from the lips of Adela Northington, when the death of a worthy and indulgent mother, her laſt ſurviving parent, who had neglected

no means to render her beloved child happy in herſelf, and a bleſſing to others, depriv-ed her of the means of ſubſiſtence in the village of her nativity; and obliged her to accept the propoſal of a lady to whom ſhe was diſtantly allied; who reſided in the gay metropolis of this kingdom, and offers her an aſylum in her family.

All who were acquainted with the diſ-treſſes of our orphan, extolled this gene-rous offer; for her father being the laſt male deſcendant of a reduced, but once diſtin-guiſhed family; and her mother a poor foundling, whoſe early years were indebted to the hand of charity for protection and ſupport; there was not a being whoſe good offices ſhe could juſtly claim.

A young and inexperienced female, de-prived of every earthly reſource!—alas! who can paint the numberleſs evils, to which ſhe is inevitably expoſed! Friends often diſappear on the approach of miſ-fortune; they ſhun the voice of calamity,

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and fly the indigent ſufferer.—The truth of all this was experienced by Adela.

Thoſe who had ſo lately crowded her parent's hoſpitable board, after paying the tribute of a little unfelt condolence at their graves, withdrew from the ſcene of woe, without attempting to avert the evil that threatened their lovely daughter. One child of philanthropy only was found among the profeſſing multitude. This was a neighbouring gentleman, whoſe children were the beloved companions of Adela's early choice; yet even the ſoothing conſolations of this worthy family were denied her, at that diſtreſsful period.—Abſence from home rendered them unacquainted with her ſorrows, until their aid became unneceſſary: for Heaven, that never leaves the meek, confiding, humble ſupplicant, had raiſed up a friend for Adela Northington, previous to her receiving the letter of Mrs. Lennard, the lady before alluded to. —But the mention of her parents recalled ſadneſs to her heart;—ſhe read, and wept

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by intervals; and as ſoon as her ſpirits were ſufficiently compoſed, haſtened to impart the contents to the worthy pair with whom ſhe had found protection and unexpected friendſhip ſince the death of her lamented mother.

Mr. Smith had ſucceeded the father of Adela in the vicarage of Barton, and from that period had ſhewn every poſſible mark of reſpect and eſteem to the widow and daughter of his worthy predeceſſor; and, immediately after the death of Mrs. Northington, ſolicited Adela to conſider his houſe as her home, until ſhe could procure herſelf one more eligible. Mrs. Smith was all goodneſs, and her tenderneſs to Adela was above all praiſe. On characters of this caſt, it is eaſy to ſuppoſe the impreſſion Mrs. Lennard's letter muſt have made. They congratulated their lovely gueſt with tears of tranſport; but their joy was clouded by the proſpect of being deprived of the pleaſure they derived from her ſociety:—for they conſidered her in the light of a child

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but were too generous to wiſh her ſtay with them, when her proſpects were ſo much brighter from being with Mrs. Lennard: Adela therefore, immediately returned her acknowledgments to that lady; and aſſured her, ſhe only waited her ſummons, to thank her perſonally for her unmerited and unſolicited goodneſs, and hoped that her future conduct would more forcibly evince her gratitude, then the moſt laboured efforts of an unſkilful pen.

Mrs. Lennard was a woman of ſtrong natural ſenſe, had a thorough knowledge of the world, and a heart naturally good; ſhe was attentive to the tale of woe, and ever ready to alleviate affliction. Thus far her character is entitled to a praiſe; but there remained ſome dark tints, which obſcured the beauty of the Portrait, and oblige us to pity and condemn, rather than approve. She was the only child of a man who ranked high in the army—and taught from her earlieſt childhood to eſteem herſelf the perfect model of every female perfection. Her

infant mind soon became open to the delusions of flattery: the pleasing sounds of adulation perpetually assailed her ears, and engrossed all her thoughts. Vanity took possession of her mind, and together with vanity, its concomitant Envy. Every female who could boast of the favours of nature, or the accomplishments of education, was dreaded as a rival, and her society avoided. —Thus her companions consisted solely of such, as from motives the most despicable, granted every indulgence to her vanity; and, thus cruelly as she was deceived, it is easy to form an idea of her character, when she attained to years of maturity.—Though blessed with a fine appearance, and designed by her Creator for what is excellent, she was vain, imperious and envious: a lovely countenance, or an engaging form, filled her with agony; and a sensible sentence, or smart repartee, made her tremble, lest her rights and privileges should be encroached on, for she considered herself entitled to the devoirs of all mankind.

Such was Mrs. Lennard—when, at the age of ſeventeen, ſhe was uſhered into the polite world—a blazing ſtar of beauty.—Numerous were the conqueſts ſhe made; with all, ſhe amuſed herſelf; but thought ſeriouſly of none, till Mr. Lennard appeared, whom fate had deſtined for the conqueror of her heart. He was the only ſon of a gentleman of ſmall fortune in Suffolk, and was one of thoſe forms which pleaſe, we ſcarcely know why. He was neither handſome nor elegant, yet he charmed almoſt every beholder. The graces, (which he poſſeſſed in ſo eminent a degree) ſoon attracted the attention of the fair Emma; and ſhe, who wiſhed to enſlave all mankind, now found herſelf a captive: her ſpirits forſook her, and every body obſerved a very material change both in her perſon and manners. Mr. Lennard was a frequent viſiter at General Courteney's. He acknowledged the beauty of Emma, and beheld with concern the penſive melancholy to which ſhe was a prey, but remained not long ignorant of the

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caufe. He had ftudied the human heart too fuccefsfully, to be miftaken in his conjectures, and foon found means of declaring to Emma a paffion ardent as her own. But the difpleafure of her father was ever prefent to her imagination; to obtain his concurrence, fhe knew was impoffible: he was haughty and impatient of oppofition; and although his whole foul was wrapt up in this darling daughter, yet the extreme aufterity of his behaviour, even to her, prevented that confidence, which it is the intereft of every good parent to encourage in his child. But far different were the fentiments of General Courteney, who governed all, who were dependent on him, with a rod of iron. The principle by which he fought to procure obedience and refpect, was fear. "It is only that," fays he, "by which the depravity of human nature can be reftrained;—for the fallen children of men, while they pay little attention to the gentle leffons of indulgence,

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will be awed into obedience by the ſpirited exertions of authority."

After ſuch a ſketch, it is eaſy to imagine what the feelings of Emma muſt be, on finding her heart devoted to Mr. Lennard. —She knew her father too well, to believe he would ever conſent to her union with any man beneath nobility; and although the inſinuating manners of Mr. Lennard made him careſſed as an agreeable companion, and admitted without ceremony as part of the family; yet an alliance, ſhe was well aſſured, would be rejected with the utmoſt ſcorn. She immediately communicated her fears to her lover, who acknowledged and lamented their juſtneſs; but reſolved to obtain her hand at any rate, relying for a pardon (after the irrevocable knot ſhould be tied) from the ſtrong pleadings of parental affection for an only and a darling child. He therefore employed all his eloquence to enforce the neceſſity of a trip to the North; to which Emma at laſt reluctantly agreed; and they vowed eternal

fidelity to each other, in the presence of him who cannot be deceived.

As soon as this momentous event was accomplished, they hastened their return to England; and a penitential letter was written to the General, begging permission to throw themselves at his feet, and receive his forgiveness and blessing. His answer was dictated by deep resentment, and wounded pride.—" They were never more to see his face; but at a distance learn to deplore their folly and ingratitude, which had frustrated his fondest hopes, and embittered the evening of his days."

The agitation of Emma on perusing this rigid sentence is not to be described; she loved her father with tenderness: he was the only parent she had ever known, and she could ill bear the total loss of his affection. The extreme tenderness, however, and assiduity of Mr. Lennard in some degree soothed her sorrow, and taught her to bear the stroke with resignation.

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A far different ſcene of Life now preſented itſelf, from what ſhe had hitherto experienced. The income of Mr. Lennard aroſe from a poſt he held under government (which did not exceed 200*l. per annum*) and the fortune of his father was too inconſiderable to afford him any aſſiſtance: our adventurous pair therefore found themſelves obliged to form their future plan of life within the narrow circle which fortune had allotted to them; and, even in this confined track, they might have ſecured as large a portion of happineſs as uſually falls to the lot of humanity, but for thoſe foibles which education had planted in the mind of Mrs Lennard. For ſome months there was nothing to interrupt their mutual felicity but the diſpleaſure of General Courteney; and time was preparing to alleviate the ſharp regret which that circumſtance occaſioned, when vanity introduced a ſubject, which proved a ſource of laſting miſery.

Mr. Lennard

Mr. Lennard had a great fondneſs for theatrical performances; and as Emma was ſtrongly attached to every public place, he found no difficulty in perſuading her to accompany him, perhaps more frequently than was conſiſtent with the ſtrict rules of prudence; and as they always went in undreſs; and made choice of the leaſt conſpicuous part of the houſe; Emma ſhared in the entertainment unnoticed by her former brilliant friends, to whoſe acquaintance ſhe could not now lay claim; for as they were only the friends of her affluence, their attachment did not ſurvive the cauſe that gave it birth.

A favourite piece of Mr. Lennard's was one evening announced at Covent Garden theatre. He prevailed on Emma to accompany him thither; and during the ſecond act of the play, a young nobleman who had been one of Emma's moſt paſſionate adorers, entered behind them. He immediately recognized, and addreſſed her; ſhe was at firſt embarraſſed, but ſoon recovered her eaſe, and

and a very interefting converfation was fupported till the performance was ended; when Lord Raymond accompanied them to the carriage, which was in waiting;—but gladly would Mr. Lennard have excufed his Lordfhip's attentions, as he had previous to his marriage believed that this Nobleman ranked next to himfelf in the heart of Emma. However, he was too juft to fuffer his uneafinefs to be vifible to her; on the contrary, he was, if poffible, more than ufually tender. But the converfation of Lord Raymond had recalled to Mrs. Lennard's remembrance the pleafures fhe had fo lately experienced in the unmeaning adulation of a multitude of admirers; and fincerely as fhe regarded Mr. Lennard, fhe deemed even his love an infufficient compenfation for the lofs of a train of adorers, and every other delight that might flow from wealth, rank, and beauty. Her offended father, too, appeared awfully fevere: here indeed was caufe for difquiet; but it was now deemed the leaft confiderable

able, and merely admitted to ſilence the reproaches of a mind naturally juſt. She had loſt her retinue of ſlaves—there was the rub: all was loſt!—all ſacrificed for the ſake of one man! and though he really poſſeſſed her heart, yet ſhe found that a mind once tainted by flattery, will ever deem it a neceſſary part of happineſs.

Such were the reflections that occupied the thoughts of Mrs. Lennard as ſhe returned from the theatre She was wretched—Diſcontent (a gueſt which when once admitted, is not ſo eaſily expelled) had taken poſſeſſion of her mind, and ſhe paid little attention to the endeavours Mr. Lennard uſed to reſtore her uſual ſerenity. The manner in which ſhe received his tenderneſs ſtabbed him to the ſoul. This was attributed to a cauſe which did her little honor in his opinion; while ſullen and ſilent, ſhe dreaded to meet his penetrating eye, ſince all his endeavours were ineffectual to conceal his real ſenſations.—His behaviour wore evident marks of conſtraint, and

Emma ardently wiſhed for an opportunity of relieving her full heart, hoping it might reſtore her peace. More than once ſhe found the ſtarting tear ready to fall; and when ſhe retired to her chamber, ſhe threw herſelf into a chair, and wept. She aſked herſelf the cauſe of all this diſtreſs, but could not well account for it. She ſtill adored her Henry; why then ſhould ſhe be thus wretched, while ſure of reigning the unrivalled poſſeſſor of his affections? Thus ſhe argued with herſelf, and ſtrove to overcome the levity of her mind. The hours of darkneſs ſeemed tedious to her diſturbed and reſtleſs mind; and the returning day was unwelcome, becauſe ſhe dreaded the ſcrutanizing eye of Mr. Lennard. But here ſhe was moſt agreeably deceived; he was all life and cheerfulneſs, and appeared totally to have forgotten the gloom of the preceding evening: his vivacity communicated its influence to Emma; and as ſoon as breakfaſt was over, he begged his lovely partner to oblige him with a favourite air

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on the harpſichord. She readily complied with his requeſt, while he " hung over her, enamour'd."

But tranſient indeed was this returning gleam of happineſs. Before ſhe aroſe from the inſtrument, a ſervant entered aud announced Lord Raymond. Their aſtoniſhment at ſo unexpected a viſiter was mutual, and his lordſhip was received with much more politeneſs than cordiality. After hoping that Emma's health had not ſuffered from the cold of the preceding evening, he apologized to Mr. Lennard for his intruſion, aſſuring him, that it was dictated ſolely by an ardent wiſh of being uſeful to him; as he had long been honored with the friendſhip and confidence of General Courteney, and hoped it might be in his power to mediate matters, and effect a reconciliation between them. This was indeed an apology which readily ſecured him a welcome. Mr. Lennard expreſſed his acknowledgments for his lordſhip's generous offer; (and ſilently accuſed himſelf for having entertain-

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ed fuſpicions, which now appeared ſo ill founded); while the expreſſive eyes of Emma ſparkled with gratitude. Their noble gueſt ſtaid with them till near the hour of dinner: he then took his leave, aſſuring the parties he ſhould uſe all his intereſt with the General, and begging to be ranked among the number of their friends.

After his departure, the unſuſpecting Emma expatiated eloquently on his merits; and though it appeared in a light rather extraordinary, Mr. Lennard could not refuſe him the tribute to which he ſeemed ſo juſtly entitled.

His lordſhip now became their conſtant viſiter: his behaviour to Emma was only polite, but to Mr. Lennard it was warm and friendly. He recounted to them his converſations and arguments with General Courteney; but ſtill this inexorable father was deaf to all that could be ſaid, and enjoined his lordſhip eternal ſilence on the ſubject. All hopes from his interceſſion

were now at an end; but his attachment to Mr. Lennard ſeemed every day to increaſe, and he was ſcarcely ever abſent from his habitation. He was treated with the ſame freedom as if he had been one of the family, and Mr. Lennard eſteemed him his moſt valuable friend. But to Emma (in a ſhort time) his attentions became rather too pointed: he often whiſpered a language too flattering for the ear of a virtuous married woman; but it was a language ſo very familiar to her, that ſhe conſidered it as the natural effect of her charms, and liſtened with unſuſpecting complacency. Her vanity was gratified by the attention of his lordſhip, and her Henry's tenderneſs ſeemed every day to increaſe; but her dream of happineſs was drawing to a concluſion. His lordſhip's aſſiduities became too ſtriking to paſs unobſerved by the eye of watchful love. Mr. Lennard ſaw, and lamented the effects of his wife's levity, though he ſtill believed her innocent in heart; but when diſapprobation takes place

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of connubial tendernefs, it feldom fails of producing the moft ferious confequences. Lord Raymond was ever propofing fome excurfion of pleafure, alledging, that their retired mode of living, fo different from what Mrs. Lennard had ever been accuftomed to, could not fail of injuring her health and fpirits. She liftened with pleafure to this fuggeftion, and entered with avidity into all the fchemes he formed for their entertainment; in which Mr. Lennard acquiefced, merely to avoid the appellation of a four, fufpicious hufband.

About this time a young lady of a genteel family, but no fortune, who had lived with Mrs. Lennard (previous to her marriage) as a companion, and been difmiffed by her father on a fufpicion of her being privy to his daughter's imprudent choice, was invited to fpend fome weeks with them; and a few days after her arrival in Argyle ftreet, a jaunt was propofed to Vauxhall, confifting only of their own party, (in which Lord Raymond

Raymond was now always included) with the addition of a female friend of Miſs Wells's—the name of their viſiter.—His lordſhip was, as uſual, the eſcort of Emma; and they ſtrolled round the gardens together, while Mr. Lennard attended the two other ladies. For ſome time they kept near each other, but on a ſudden Emma and her companion diſappeared. It is not eaſy to conceive the diſtreſs of Mr. Lennard, after he had ſpent a conſiderable time in fruitleſs ſearch of them. At length a ſong from a favourite performer, drew his party to the orcheſtra, where, in a few moments, the deſerters joined them. His lordſhip expreſſed his ſurprize at having ſo long miſſed them, and talked a great deal of the chagrin the ſeparation had occaſioned; while Emma bluſhed, and ſtammered out an excuſe for his inattention. Mr. Lennard, though he attempted to laugh at the incident, was far from being ſatisfied, but remained penſive and thoughtful the reſt of the evening; nor was Emma s uneaſineſs

inferior to his. She was not ſatisfied with her own conduct: ſhe had ſuffered his lordſhip to remove her from the preſence of her huſband, and make an avowal of love, forbidden by every law, human and divine. It is true, ſhe had ſuppreſſed every idea of hope, and expreſſed the deepeſt reſentment at his preſumption; yet her heart told her that the fault originated with herſelf. She had ſmiled on his gallantry, and the pleaſure it afforded her, ſhe feared, had encouraged him to declare the ſentiments with which ſhe had inſpired him. The diſtreſs which was but too apparent in Mr. Lennard, could not fail of adding to her diſquiet; and to preſerve appearances, ſhe was obliged to aſſume an air of tranquility, which encreaſed her mental ſufferings, for nature had never deſigned her for hypocriſy.

The preſence of Miſs Wells now afforded her friends a conſiderable relief, as it proved a means of diſſipating that conſtraint, which otherwiſe could not fail of ſubſiſting between

tween them; and Miſs Wells's gaiety was never more agreeable than at this period, as ſhe was quite unconſcious of what had paſſed in the minds of her friends, and conſidering their ſeparation at Vauxhall merely as an incident of chance, chatted and laughed with her uſual vivacity. His lordſhip remained with them ſome time after their return, and his ſpirits ſeemed little inferior to thoſe of Miſs Wells's; but far different was the ſource from which they proceeded: her's were effuſions reſulting from peace of mind, and natural cheerfulneſs; his the effort of artifice, to conceal the real turpitude of his intentions.

After the departure of his lordſhip, Mrs. Lennard almoſt prevailed on herſelf to make a confidant of her deſerving huſband; and happy would it have been for her, had ſhe obeyed this laudable impulſe, (for when incidents at firſt little in yourſelves are not explained, they ſeldom fail of being miſconſtrued, and placed in the moſt diſagreeable point of view); but ſhe feared the

fatal effects of a quarrel between his lordship and Mr. Lennard; and her suppression of the occurrences of that evening completed the plan, of which her interview with his lordship at the play had laid the foundation But this unprincipled man (notwithstanding the repulse he had met with) dared the next morning to write a letter to the unfortunate object he had marked out for destruction, repeating what he had before avowed; and hoping that it was impossible for cruelty to dwell in the bosom of beauty. His arrogant epistle fell into the hands of Mr. Lennard. From his dressing-room he saw his lordship's footman deliver it to his own servant; and calling the fellow, without betraying any marks of suspicion, desired he would give him the letter, as he was going to Mrs. Lennard's apartment, and would give it to her himself. The man not having any idea of the real motive for this request, gave his master the letter, and the well known hand of his lordship filled him with distraction. The air of secrecy with which

which his lordſhip's meſſenger delivered it, joined to his own intention of leaving town early that morning, with which his lordſhip was acquainted, and which the diſtreſs of his mind had alone prevented; all conſpired to convince him, that this letter was never deſigned for the eye of a huſband, and he was juſt going to ſatisfy his doubts, by breaking the ſeal;—when he recollected that ſuch a ſtep would be highly reprehenſible. He therefore determined only to be the meſſenger of it; and immediately haſtened to Emma's apartment; but ſhe was not there; every part of the houſe was then ſought, but without ſucceſs. He enquired about her of Miſs Wells; but ſhe had not ſeen her ſince breakfaſt. The garden was now the only place unſearched; there Mr. Lennard knew ſhe often ſpent her leiſure hours, ſometimes amuſing herſelf with the flowers, but oftener in reading in an arbour, which he had formed with his own hands. Here he now found her bathed in tears. When Mr. Lennard entered, ſhe ſtarted!

he judging her tears to proceed from a caufe very different from their real fource, put on a countenance not expreffive of the moft pleafing emotions. With a ferious air he gave her the letter, only faying, "Lord Raymond's fervant had juft brought that."

It is not eafy to defcribe what Emma felt at this moment; fhe trembled! and could fcarcely fupport herfelf; when pride ftepped in to her aid, and whifpered; that the look and manner of Mr. Lennard merited refentment, rather than confidence. She therefore haftily perufed the letter, and put it in her pocket, without faying a word. This was a conduct Mr. Lennard did not expect; nor could he avoid fhewing his difapprobation of it, by faying, "he could not imagine what Lord Raymond could have to communicate, that muft be concealed from a hufband.'—This fhe thought was afferting the lordly rights of his fex; and rifing from her feat with haughtinefs and indignation, affured him, "that who-

ever dared to arraign her conduct, was undeserving her confidence, and forfeited all claim to her affection; nor should any consideration prevail on her to satisfy the doubts of so despicable a being.' With those words she quitted the arbor, leaving the husband in a state of mind, of which nothing but experience can form a just idea. He did not attribute her conduct to the real cause, but thought her anger only assumed, as the only means of concealing her misconduct. And, resolving to revenge his injured honor, returned to the house to inform Emma of his determination: which was, to insist on an explanation from his lordship; and if it ended, as his prophetic fears assured him it would oblige him to bid adieu to his native land, and every dear connection. But his design of seeing his wife was frustrated by her obstinacy: she had locked herself up in her own apartment; nor could the joint entreaties of Miss Wells and himself prevail on her to see him. This conduct almost drove him to a state

of insanity; and like a madman, he hurried to Lord Raymond, who was not a little surprised at the appearance of so unwished for a visiter: but his surprise was considerably increased, when Mr. Lennard, in the most peremptory manner, insisted on an explanation of the letter. His lordship's confusion at first was so great that he could make no reply; but a moment's reflection convinced him, that the letter had been intercepted, and opened by Mr. Lennard; and instead of giving the demanded information, he replied that—" he was accountable to no man for his conduct, but was at all times ready to vindicate his honor with his sword." This produced an answer from Mr. Lennard, taxing him with assuming the sacred name of friend as cover to the most villainous designs.—In short, their rage was mutual; and before they parted, an early hour was fixed on, namely, the next morning, to meet and decide their difference according to the modern rules of honor.

Mr. Lennard then returned to his own houfe, and without enquiring for his wife, fpent the melancholy hours alone, till the time appointed for his rencontre with Lord Raymond arrived. In the mean time, the wretched Emma endured all the agonies, which refentment, love, and a confcioufnefs of having through imprudence merited her fate. could inflict. In vain did Mifs Wells ufe every means to footh her difturbed mind; her peace was gone, and the gentle voice of friendfhip fpoke unheard: but little did fhe fufpect the dreadful ftroke that awaited her.

The next morning Mifs Wells entered her apartment with horror and diftrefs painted in every feature: Lord Raymond was run through the body, and Mr. Lennard was brought home wounded. As foon as Mifs Wells had ended her melancholy recital, her unhappy friend, without making any reply, flew to the apartment of her Henry, whom fhe found (fupported in a chair) pale and almoft lifelefs. While

a ſurgeon was examining his wound, diſtracted at his ſituation, ſhe threw her arms around him, and uttered the moſt wild and incoherent language, to which he was incapable of making any return; but hiding his face with his handkerchief, he waved his hand for her to leave him; and ſhe was (not without ſome difficulty) prevailed on to comply. In the boſom of Miſs Wells ſhe now poured forth her complaints: "Ah! my dear Amelia," ſaid ſhe, "am I not too ſeverely puniſhed? You, who know my heart, will readily believe I never ſuffered a thought to enter there, which could offend againſt the moſt rigid rules of virtue. Never did it admit any image, but that of my beloved Henry; but he believes me culpable: I know he does; his contenance juſt now was expreſſive of deteſtation; and how am I to undeceive him? It is true, my behaviour yeſterday morning will not admit of an excuſe: I ought, by a candid explanation, to have cleared away thoſe doubts, (for which there certainly was but

too much apparent reaſon ; but conſcious of the innocence of my heart, I could ill brook the imputation of guilt, and ſuffered my reſentment to lead me I know not whither. But could you, Amelia, prevail on him now to hear me, all may yet be well; for ſurely he is too good to refuſe his forgiveneſs of an error, in which the heart was not concerned." "But perhaps," ſaid ſhe, ſtarting, "he is now in the agonies of death! I cannot ſupport the thought! My head turns round,—fly, my friend, and bring me an account of what the ſurgeon ſays;—and tell my Henry, that indeed I am innocent, and moſt unhappy."

Miſs Wells readily obeyed her injunctions; and returning in a few minutes, aſſured her that the ſurgeon pronounced his wounds to be but ſlight; that his faintneſs proceeded only from the loſs of blood,—but that Lord Raymond was no more. It was therefore neceſſary for Mr. Lennard to be immediately removed; and Mr. Felton (the ſurgeon) had offered him an aſylum in

his houſe until he ſhould be recovered.— " But will he not ſee me?"—ſaid the unhappy Emma,—" Will he not ſuffer me to watch over him? I will do all in my power to alleviate his ſufferings,—and by my tenderneſs render the bed of ſickneſs leſs painful! This was once in my power; but now, I fear, I am judged unworthy of the office."—" By no means," replied Miſs Wells,—" but at this time Mr. Felton is of opinion that a meeting with you would affect him too ſenſibly, and rather impede than accelerate his recovery."—" If the health of my Henry renders my abſence neceſſary, I can eaſily ſubmit.—But are you, Amelia, quite ſure," continued ſhe, fixing her penetrating eyes on Miſs Wells, " quite ſure, you do not deceive me? Am I not thought unworthy of being admitted? I fear this is the real truth, and I conjure you to be ſincere; for if it is ſo, you are convinced no art can long conceal it from me."— Miſs Wells again repeated her former aſſurances, dictated by real affection and

ſympathy with her friend, whoſe conjectures were but too juſt:—for Mr. Lennard had really refuſed to ſee her, as the conduct of Lord Raymond, preceding the duel, gave but too much reaſon to place her in the darkeſt point of view; and though it is probable that this unhappy man in his laſt moments might wiſh to clear her innocence,—yet the ſwift ſtroke of death rendered this impracticable.

Mr. Lennard's firſt wiſh now ſeemed to be for ever to avoid the ſight of her, by whom he ſuppoſed himſelf ſo cruelly deceived. He was accordingly removed that evening to the houſe of Mr. Felton. The next morning Emma accompanied by Miſs Wells, went to viſit him: he did not wiſh to ſee her, yet he could not refuſe her admittance. Their meeting was truly diſtreſsful. She knelt by his bed-ſide, and weeping, aſked, " if he would not now believe his Emma innocent, and forgive all that was paſt?" " Yes,"—ſaid he, ſtretching out his hand to raiſe her,—" ſincerely

do

do I forgive. and may heaven ever blefs you." — Then turning to Mr. Felton, " What a pity,"—faid he, (in a low voice) " that fuch an angel fhould fall!" She remained with him fome hours, when he complained of being oppreffed with fleep; and fhe left him, promifing to return in the evening.

In the mean time, the death of Lord Raymond had reached the ears of General Courteney, in whofe opinion his lordfhip had ever ranked very high: guided therefore by partiality, and full of refentment againft Mr. Lennard, whom he confidered as no better than a ruffian, who, regardlefs of every tie of gratitude, had entered the hofpitable dwelling of his beft friend—and deprived him of all his foul held dear, he fcrupled not to pronounce his friend's life, and his daughter's honor, the victims of a jealous villain. Suppofing (from common report) that Mr. Lennard had left England, he immediately wrote to his daughter, affuring her of his forgivenefs, if fhe would

for ever renounce the wretch her huſband. The peruſal of this letter agitated her with a thouſand contending paſſions: but ardently wiſhing to be reconciled to her father, ſhe went to his houſe, and throwing herſelf at his feet, entreated him generouſly to pronounce her pardon, without exacting a ſacrifice which duty, and a tenderneſs which ſhe could not wiſh ſhould ever ceaſe, forbad her to make.—Liſtening to the eloquent pleadings of natural affection, and moved by her extreme diſtreſs, he forgot the auſterity of his manners, and embracing her, enquired, " if her huſband had really left England." Which, fearful of revealing his retreat, Emma aſſured him he had. The General then deſired ſhe would as ſoon as poſſible quit her preſent habitation, and make his houſe again her home. As this invitation was not to be rejected, ſhe took her leave, bathed in tears of gratitude, promiſing to wait on him again next morning.

On

On her return home, ſhe found a note from Mr. Felton, deſiring to ſee her as ſoon as poſſible: ſhe inſtantly obeyed the ſummons, and found the purport of his requeſt was, to inform her that an opportunity now offered for Mr. Lennard to leave England, which it was highly prudent for him to embrace, as he could now travel without any apprehenſions of danger from his wounds. Mr. Felton's note, which ſhe had juſt received, was dictated by a real tenderneſs for her; as he feared that had Mr. Lennard gone without ſeeing her, the ſhock it would certainly give her might prove fatal.

After returning her acknowledgments to Mr. Felton, ſhe haſtened to her dear Henry, whom ſhe found even better than ſhe expected from Mr. Felton's account. She related to him her reconciliation with her father, (ſuppreſſing as much as poſſible what concerned himſelf). "Then," ſaid he, "I am eaſy on your account: "it has removed an inexpreſſible load from my heart, to find you will not be without a

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protector." "But ftill, my Henry,"—returned fhe — "I fear you go unfatisfied refpecting the conduct of your Emma."— "Never, never;"—faid he with emotion, "mention the ungrateful fubject more; it is impoffible to recall paft moments; but be affured you will ever be my firft and deareft concern."

The hour of feparation now approached; but fcenes like this are not to be defcribed. Emma begged he would often write to her; a requeft he did not refufe in exprefs words; but the event proved, he never meant to grant it.

A few days after Mr. Lennard's departure, Emma accompanied her father to his feat in Norfolk. The fhades of low wood were particularly foothing to the melancholy ftate of her mind, and every walk was witnefs to the tears fhe fhed in memory of departed happinefs. Here fhe fpent fome weeks; and it was not without pain fhe heard the time announced for their return to town, for fhe felt herfelf incapable of

joining in the ſcenes of gaiety which would there await her: but time, the ſovereign remedy for every human ill, alleviated her ſorrow, and (in ſome meaſure) diſpelled the deep melancholy which the loſs of her Henry occaſioned.

For ſome weeks every poſt filled her with expectations of hearing from him; but it always came fraught with diſappointment. She wrote to his father, and every friend whom ſhe ſuppoſed likely to give her information of him: but he was alike ſilent to all, nor was any of them acquainted with the place of his retreat. Months and years elapſed without her receiving any intelligence; and conſidering him for ever loſt to her, ſhe ſtrove to forget the regret which inſpired in thoſe ſcenes which gave delight before ſhe became a wife.

About ſix years after this event, the hand of death deprived her of her father, who bequeathed her his whole fortune, to a very conſiderable amount; but (ſuperior to ſelfiſh conſiderations) ſhe ſincerely mourned his

loſs;

loſs; and her friends fearing her health might be endangered, adviſed her to a change of ſcene. Having therefore ſome near relations in France, ſhe went thither, accompanied by her old friend Miſs Wells, and returned in a few months much the better for her tour. Miſs Wells now became a member of her family again, and attended her into Norfolk, where ſhe, by mere accident, became acquainted with the diſtreſs of the only remaining deſcendent of the Northington family, of which the mother of Mrs. Lennard was a branch; and who, being charmed with the anſwer which Adela returned to her letter, reſolved to go herſelf, and conduct her young friend to her hoſpitable dwelling.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Mrs. Lennard arrived at the peaceful abode of the worthy vicar of Barton, ſhe was received with that heart felt cordiality, which marks the genuine excellence of minds naturally virtuous, and untainted by any intercourſe with vice or folly. On enquiring for Miſs Northington, Mrs. Smith informed her, that ſhe was gone on a viſit to a youthful friend of hers in the neighbouring village. This was rather a diſappointment to Mrs. Lennard; however, a ſervant was immediately diſpatched to her, and in a few hours ſhe returned, accompanied by a young gentleman; nor was the intermediate time paſſed unpleaſantly by Mrs. Lennard. The converſation of Mr. and Mrs. Smith was highly agreeable to her; for though they had never mixed with what is generally termed the polite world, their minds were improved by the beſt authors, and a valuable ſociety of

of ſenſible friends; and they poſſeſſed a fund of uſeful knowledge, rarely to be met with in ſcenes of gaiety and diſſipation.

Mrs. Lennard (in the courſe of their converſation) made many enquiries relative to Adela, and the anſwers ſhe received afforded her the higheſt ſatisfaction; as they both aſſured her ſhe was, in the moſt enlarged ſenſe, truly amiable. She therefore felt a real pleaſure when ſhe ſaw the lovely girl and her companion enter an avenue which led to the houſe. To prevent the ſurpriſe which her unexpected meeting with Mrs. Lennard muſt have occaſioned, Mrs. Smith had kindly ſent a note by the meſſenger, to inform her who their gueſt was. Adela was therefore leſs embaraſſed than ſhe would otherwiſe have been, and received her benefactreſs in a manner ſtrongly expreſſive of the gratitude of her heart. But if Mrs. Lennard was delighted with Adela's letter, ſhe was now really aſtoniſhed at finding ſo many charms hid in an obſcure village in ———ſhire, and already felt a

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partiality for their poſſeſſor. But leſt, my readers ſhould be led to draw the portrait of Adela in the form of a Venus, I muſt haſten to undeceive them; for roſes and lilies had very little ſhare in her complexion. Her features were not regular, nor her figure drawn by the exact rules of ſymmetry, and yet ſhe was in the higheſt degree lovely; this may ſeem a paradox, but it is nevertheleſs true.

Adela's perſon was not critically handſome, but it was an aſſemblage of grace, eloquence, and animation, aided by an irreſiſtible *Je ne ſcai quoi*, which all felt without being able to deſcribe.

The uncommon delicacy of her mind and manners communicated an inexpreſſible charm to every look, word, and action; and gave her credit for beauty, which in reality ſhe never poſſeſſed. The admiration of Mrs. Lennard and Adela at their firſt interview was natural. The former thought her adopted ſiſter, (as ſhe kindly termed Adela) a combination of every feminine

attraction; and the latter declared to Mrs. Smith, that she had not an idea of beauty so perfect as Mrs Lennard's; nor indeed was the blessing common, for nature to her had been truly liberal.

The gentleman who accompanied Miss Northington, was the brother of a young lady with whom Adela had in childhood contracted an intimacy, from being of a disposition similar to her own. Hitherto their friendship had met with no interruption: and from their intimacy Mr. Amsbury, for that was the gentleman's name, had an opportunity of discovering the excellence of Adela's mind, nor was his heart proof against its effects; for she made an impression on him, which time could never remove. The idea of losing her was therefore truly painful, and affected his spirits in a manner which could not escape the notice of Adela; but she was far from suspecting the real cause, for she had ever placed his attentions to the account of his sister, nor once suspected a lover where she

only wiſhed a friend. But Mr. Amſbury was not the only unhappy perſon in the groupe; for Mr. and Mrs. Smith felt the utmoſt reluctance at parting with their lovely charge; ſo that, in fact, Mrs. Lennard's was the only heart free from diſquiet; for Adela's was far from being ſo. Her mind was a confuſion of mixed ſenſations, as ſhe was going to be torn from every attachment ſhe had on earth, from every friend and companion of her youth, to be introduced among an aſſemblage of beings very different from thoſe with whom ſhe had hitherto aſſociated. Thoſe reflections filled her with an anxiety which ſhe found it difficult to ſuppreſs; but her gratitude and reſpect to Mrs. Lennard rendered this neceſſary, and ſhe behaved with ſuch placid compoſure as placed her in the moſt pleaſing point of view to that lady, who little ſuſpecting the real emotions which agitated her mind, concluded that, like the generality of girls educated in the country, ſhe

was

was happy in the profpects of gaiety, with which fhe would foon be prefented.

The next morning was fixed on for their departure; and Mr. Amfbury took his leave, promifing to return with his fifter to bid Mifs Northington adieu; and Adela began to make preparation for her journey: which in fome meafure faved her from the anticipation of the painful moment of feparation. The much dreaded period now approached; and before breakfaft was removed, Mr. and Mifs Amfbury made their appearance with melancholy marked in every feature. This was more than Adela could well bear; her own feelings were trivial in comparifon with what were excited in her breaft by thofe of her friends; and fhe was obliged to embrace the firft opportunity of withdrawing, to hide from obfervation the tears fhe found ready to flow. fhe retired to her own room to indulge that grief which could no longer be fuppreffed; and was foon joined by Mifs Amfbury, whofe heart was full to offer her friend the

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leaſt conſolation. They were weeping in each others arms when Mrs. Smith entered the room; who had ſhe not been perfectly convinced it was neceſſary to conceal her emotions, could eaſily have completed an tragic trio;—but ſhe came to inform Adela, that the chaiſe was ready, and that Mrs. Lennard waited for her.

After ſome minutes ſpent in endeavouring to remove the traces of ſorrow, the ladies accompanied Adela down ſtairs, where they found ſeveral of her youthful friends, who were come to give the only proof of affection in their power. As ſoon as ſhe entered the room Mr. Smith took her by the hand, and leading her to Mrs. Lennard, "In this dear girl, Madam," ſaid the good man, "I preſent you with a real treaſure; and I have not the ſmalleſt doubt but ſhe will prove to be worthy of that protection with which you honor her, and gain an intereſt in your heart, as I may venture to ſay ſhe has in thoſe of all preſent." He could no more,—but turned to the window to con-

ceal

ceal what he was unable to ſuppreſs; and Mrs. Lennard (who began to be infected with the humour of the company) ſeeing her carriage appear at the gate, after giving Mr. and Mrs. Smith an invitation to viſit her in town, propoſed going. Numberleſs were the adieus which now paſſed, but poor Adela could ſcarely articulate a ſyllable: the anguiſh of her heart was inexpreſſible! yet ſhe had much to ſay; ſhe hid her face with her handkerchief; ſhe wept, and in her tears found ſome relief; then turning to Mr. and Mrs. Smith, "here," ſaid ſhe, "I would expreſs my gratitude; but it is impoſſible! words are inadequate to deſcribe what I at this moment feel." Mrs. Smith now interrupted, and embraced her with tenderneſs, ſaying, "We know what you would ſay, my beloved Adela, but why will you thus diſtreſs yourſelf and us, by over-rating trifles? Need I aſſure you, that if ever I have been happy enough to render you ſervice, I conſider your friendſhip as an abundant recompence, and at this mo-

ment feel myſelf the obliged party." Adela felt the tenderneſs, the delicacy, and the inexpreſſible obligation theſe words conferred. Her cheek fluſhed, her heart beat; the tear of ſenſibility quivered in her eye; ſhe was unable to clothe the glowing language of her ſoul in words; but hiding her face in the boſom of her Louiſa, ſhe wept her emotions. The gentle Theodore ſighed deeply—hung his head in ſilence—and look'd

"Like merit ſcorn'd by innocent authority—."

Every eye dropped its ſympathetic teſtimony, as ſhe followed her benefactreſs with reluctant ſteps to the waiting carriage.

The gardens through which ſhe paſſed, every animate or inanimate object around her laid claim to her affection. There innumerable veſtiges of innocent and delightful ſcenes aroſe to her view. The moſs-grown arbour or oft-frequented labyrinth, where ſhe had ſhared the raptures of parental fondneſs, or liſtened to the tranquil

voice

voice of friendſhip, were remembered with regret.

" Here," ſaid ſhe, " I have aſſiſted my mother in her domeſtic employments. In this loved ſpot have I attended to the leſſons of inſtruction, and imbibed precepts of truth and morality. Here my heart has beamed with tenderneſs and gratitude, and been warmed to emulation by the fond approving ſmile, or kind endearment of the beſt of fathers. How often in theſe peaceful glades have I liſtened to the ſound of rural feſtivity, and my feet kept time to the meaſures of ſome cheerful ruſtic!"

Then were the ſoliloques of our heroine as ſhe turned from theſe happy home-felt ſcenes congenial to her ſoul.—Many an impaſſionate tear, many a tender adieu, marked her departure from Barton. The humble inhabitants flocked around, and loaded her with bleſſings, even the old houſe-dog howled doleful when the chaiſe drove from the gate.

CHAP.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAPTER III.

SILENCE, for ſome minutes, prevailed, after the parties were ſeated in the carriage, as Mrs. Lennard participated in Adela's diſtreſs too ſincerely to offer unavailing arguments; but after her firſt emotions had ſubſided, a converſation was introduced, in which Mrs. Lennard deſcribed to her the way of life in which ſhe would ſoon be initiated; not without offering a few hints on the different conduct neceſſary to be obſerved, from that to which ſhe had hitherto been accuſtomed. "You have always, my dear girl," ſaid ſhe, "uttered the genuine ſentiments of your heart among the little circle of your acquaintance; but you will now find it neceſſary to arrange them, to avoid giving offence, and accommodate your converſation to thoſe with whom you aſſociate." "Muſt I then, Madam," replied Adela, "become a diſſembler? Indeed, it is a character for

which, I preſume, nature never deſigned me; and I fear, I ſhall but very ill acquit myſelf." "You miſtake me," returned Mrs. Lennard, "diſſimulation is not neceſſary; but we muſt not look on every character we meet with in high life, with too ſtrict an eye; we expect indulgence to our own foibles, we muſt therefore grant it to thoſe of others, and by taking the extenuating part, and giving into the humours of thoſe with whom we converſe, ſecure their ſuffrages, ſhould we ever need them. This, experience has taught me, is not to be neglected with impunity; for in my earlier days, I deſpiſed the opinion of the world, and ſeverely have I ſuffered from it. Profit therefore by that wiſdom which I have purchaſed at ſo high a rate." Adela thanked Mrs. Lennard for her kind advice, and aſſured her, ſhe ſhould on every occaſion regard it with due deference and attention.

The ſun was diſappearing behind the neighbouring hills, when they arrived at the ſeat of Sir Edmund Benfield, where they

they ſtayed the night; and the following afternoon reached Low-Wood, where they were received by Miſs Wells; who, after the firſt ſalutations, beheld Adela with an attention which ſeemed fearful of finding too many attractions; for Miſs Wells was not one of the few females who can look on ſuperior lovelineſs with compoſure. Indeed, ſhe was particularly aſſiduous to diſcover ſome defect in Adela, as ſhe conſidered her not only as a competitor for the favour of Mrs. Lennard, but as her rival at every place where they appeared together; and that though ſhe had long been accuſtomed to yield the palm to Mrs. Lennard, ſhe could ill brook the idea of doing ſo to one, who, like herſelf, was a dependent: ſhe therefore endeavoured to perſuade herſelf that Adela was indebted to novelty alone for the encomiums which a Mr. Budenal (whom accident had that evening brought to Low-Wood) beſtowed on her: "For ſurely," ſaid ſhe, looking in the glaſs, "every impartial beholder muſt own

her in beauty infinitely my inferior: why, her complexion is that of a gipfey compared to mine, and both her eyes and hair are too dark to be handfome. Her figure, indeed," continued fhe, turning half round to have a more perfect view of herfelf, " may be as well, but her walk is horridly untaught and vulgar; and both thefe circumftances and the foolifh aukwardnefs of her manners fhew, fhe has fcarcely ever been out of a cottage: and though the *outré* tafte of Mr. Budenal led him to admire fuch a piece of lifelefs rufticity, I do not fuppofe," again looking at herfelf with felf-approbation, " there is another man exifting who would give fo ftrange a preference." Here her foliloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Lennard, who wondering at her long ftay, (as fhe had only left them to fetch a book which fhe had borrowed of Mr. Budenal) came herfelf in fearch of her, partly from a defire of knowing what fhe thought of her new acquifition. But Mifs Wells only anfwered this enquiry by another,

ther, faying, "Do you, Madam, think her beautiful?" "No," replied Mrs. Lennard, "not abfolutely beautiful, but you muft furely think her a very fine girl." "Yes," returned Mifs Wells coolly, "fhe certainly is that." They now re-joined Adela and Mr. Budenal, whom they found engaged in a difpute. "I muft beg your affiftance, Madam," faid Mr. Budenal, turning to Mrs. Lennard, "for this fair lady maintains us to be fuch a depraved fet of beings, that we are unworthy and incapable of the friendfhip of your lovely fex."—"You muft excufe my interrupting you, Sir," faid Adela, with a blufh, "let Mrs. Lennard underftand what I alledged, and I am content to abide by the decifion. In anfwer to fome of this gentleman's queftions, I only faid, that experience taught us there was little dependance to be put in their profeffions." "And I muft really efpoufe your opinion," returned Mrs. Lennard, "fo Mr. Budelal is likely to find me a very indifferent advocate." "Well," replied he,

" though I have loſt my cauſe, I have this ſatisfaction, it is only to be *won* by powerful pleading; and who is there but muſt think it an honor to be conquered here?" continued he, bowing to Adela. This ſpeech increaſed the confuſion of her to whom it was addreſſed; but turning to Miſs Wells, he exclaimed,—" Here is a lady to whom I have not yet applied. Perhaps ſhe may eſpouſe my ſide of the queſtion: what think you of the matter, Madam?" "Why, Sir," ſaid Miſs Wells, " if I muſt ſincerely give my opinion, I think we frequently experience more friendſhip from your ſex, than from our own." " Bravo!" cried he, " Madam, I am truly grateful, and am half inclined to return to the attack, but that I fear it is impoſſible to maintain the field againſt ſuch able forces; ſo ladies," continued he with vivacity, " I lay the victory at your feet."

The converſation now took a more general turn, and the humour of Mrs. Lennard and Mr. Budenal (who frequently

exerciſed

exercifed their wit on each other) contributed to difperfe the gloom which Adela's recent feparation from her friends had occafioned; and Mr. Budenal's attentions were particularly pointed to her; he was therefore ambitious of fhining with more then ufual eclat, and told Mrs. Lennard, "her charming friend was a perfect enchantrefs, from whofe power he already feared it would be difficult to effect an efcape." But that lady knew this to be the every-day language of Mr. Budenal, and therefore only replied to it with raillery.

An airing party was now propofed for the next morning, in which his name was inferted as one of the efcorts. But Mr. Budenal's affiduity to Adela, though by herfelf it was fcarcely obferved, and by Mrs. Lennard was attributed folely to her being a new object, was to Mifs Wells a caufe of real difquiet; as fhe had long wifhed to make that gentleman her captive. His prefent behaviour therefore converted the uneafinefs the firft appearance of Adela

 had

had excited into abſolute diſguſt; but her reſpect for Mrs. Lennard obliged her to dreſs the ſentiments of her heart in the garb of kindneſs. However, after the departure of Mr. Budenal, no longer able to ſuppreſs her feelings, ſhe appealed to Adela for her opinion of him; who replied with much ſimplicity, "that ſhe thought him a very agreeable man." "Yes," returned Miſs Wells, with an arch look, "he has this evening taken great pains to appear ſo."

It now grew late, and Adela being rather fatigued, readily acquieſced in Mrs. Lennard's opinion, that it was time to ſeparate for the night; and retiring to her chamber, ſpent a conſiderable time in revolving the various occurrences of the day, till reflection was ſuſpended in ſleep.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning Mr. Budenal made his appearance at Low-Wood before the ladies had quitted their apartments; for the idea of Adela had not been abſent from his mind one inſtant, and he was very ſolicitous again to behold the lovely original; but when Miſs Wells entered the breakfaſt parlour, at finding him already there, ſhe ſtarted! and attributing it to the real cauſe, rallied him with affected vivacity on the loſs of his heart; to which he replied with much humour; and it proved a theme of converſation till Mrs. Lennard and Adela joined them. The attention of Mr. Budenal was inſtantly engroſſed by her, who was the cauſe of his early viſit; and after making his devoirs to Mrs. Lennard, he ſeated himſelf next Adela, addreſſing the far greateſt part of his converſation to her; but gladly would ſhe have diſpenſed with this diſtinction, for ſhe felt herſelf very ill qualified to

ſupport a converſation with a gay man of faſhion.

Another viſiter now made his *entrée.*—Lord Wentworth, a young nobleman, who was a near neighbour, and frequent attendant on Mrs. Lennard; the deſtined heir and nephew of the Earl of Lanwarn, and the boſom friend of Mr. Budenal; and juſt as the carriage was ordered for their morning excurſion, a gentleman was announced whoſe preſence was very unexpected. This was the Hon. Auguſtus Melville, the orphan ſon of a diſtinguiſhed military officer nearly allied to the Wentworth family. He was going on a viſit to Sir Edmund Benfield; and being frequently one of Mrs. Lennard's attendants in town, would not paſs without paying her his compliments. The entrance of Mr. Melville would have put an end to the propoſed airing, had not an unguarded expreſſion of Miſs Wells's made him acquainted with it; he then entreated he might not be made the means of preventing pleaſure, and offered (though

contrary to his firſt intention) to devote a few hours to the pleaſure of making one in the party. The carriage was accordingly ordered; and they ſtaid out till near the hour of dinner, attended by their three beaux on horſeback. When they returned, Lord Wentworth and Mr. Melville were under a neceſſity of taking their leave, as they had already made their viſit much longer than they at firſt propoſed; but Mrs. Lennard found no difficulty in prevailing on Mr. Budenal to conclude the day with them; for the impreſſion which Adela's firſt appearance had made on him increaſed every moment, and he already was (or at leaſt fancied himſelf) deſperately in love; but whatever were his feelings in favor of Adela, her opinion of him was not the moſt propitious. She thought his perſon graceful and elegant, and his manners very agreeable for the companion of an hour; but he was by no means a character that could attach a ſoul like her's: one look from ſuch a gentle unaſſuming character as Lord

Lord Wentworth was likely to effect more than a ten years siege from Mr. Budenal; for though she had been in his lordship's company but a few hours, she could not avoid thinking him the most pleasing man she had ever yet conversed with; and the encomiums bestowed on him by Mrs. Lennard contributed to strengthen her good opinion: for he was (without appearing desirous of it) particularly distinguished by the ladies; though far from possessing that indiscriminate attention which often secures their favour. Nor was he a man of gallantry in any sense of the word; his disposition was remarkably serious for one of twenty-seven: he spoke little, and flattered less; it is therefore unaccountable by what means he obtained such general favour, which can only be attributed to that indifference which had never yet been known to feel a preference for any; therefore all flattered themselves with a — perhaps — that fate might have designed them to subdue this heart of adamant.

In

In turning our attention to Mr. Melville, a character very different from that of Lord Wentworth presented itself. Nature had bestowed on him a susceptibility of heart, which (though in some degree amiable) often rendered him seriously unhappy. This foible, the impetuosity and variableness of his temper considerably augmented, and was sometimes productive of events which involved him in distress; as he was by education impressed with the strictest principles of religion, and the genuine rectitude of his heart occasioned the most severe remorse, when the bewitching labyrinths of gaiety and dissipation made him neglect the valuable lessons of wisdom. A recent love affair was the cause of Mr. Melville's intended visit to Benfield Abbey. Chance had made him acquainted with a young lady, with whom he became passionately enamoured; but the inclinations of the lady were turned a different way, and she was deaf to all he could urge. As a last resource, he was now going to make trial of the

boasted

boaſted efficacy of abſence; for though with many this diſappointment was only made the ſubject of a laugh, his health and peace of mind experienced a real injury.

Soon after the departure of Lord Wentworth and this gentleman, Mrs. Lennard mentioned her deſign of leaving Low-Wood the following day. " And may I, Madam," ſaid Mr. Budenal, " have the honor of attending you." " Your company will be very acceptable," replied the lady; " but I imagined you purpoſed making a much longer ſtay in the country." " I did ſo," returned Mr. Budenal; " but ſome very material revolutions have taken place ſince that deſign was formed, which render it impoſſible for me to remain one inſtant behind you." " Well," ſaid Mrs. Lennard with a laugh. " if my preſence is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to your felicity, I will not be ſo hard-hearted as to offer one word in oppoſition, but depend on you for our champion; and as a further proof of your capacity to diſcharge the duties of that im-

portant

portant office, what ſay you to being our Knight-Errant this evening, merely to raiſe the ſpirits of Miſs Northington, who ſeems quite *la penſeroſa* ſince the departure of our other beaux?" "But I hope, my Adela," continued ſhe, "neither of them has ſtolen your heart; for Melville, we are well aſſured, has not one to beſtow in return; and it is a matter of diſpute, whether that bauble was not omitted in the compoſition of Wentworth." "I hope, Madam," replied Adela gravely, "you cannot ſeriouſly ſuppoſe me capable of ſuch ſudden impreſſions; which in our ſex can, in my opinion, only proceed from levity of mind." "You judge rightly," returned Mrs. Lennard, "but come, don't bluſh thus at my *badinage*, I meant to make you laugh, not to diſtreſs you; for I ſhould much ſooner ſuſpect you of being a miſer than a prodigal in the diſpoſal of your heart." "If your conjectures are well founded," ſaid Mr. Budenal, "numerous, I much fear, will be the victims doomed to fall."—"A truce

with

with your wiſe remarks," rejoined Mrs. Lennard, "if you pleaſe we'll defer the diſcuſſion of theſe till another opportunity, or it will be too late for our intended excurſion." "But where is Miſs Wells? I fancy our curious diſſertation has frightened her away." Juſt as Mrs. Lennard uttered theſe words, Miſs Wells appeared, complained of being ſuddenly ſeized with a head-ach, and begged to be excuſed from making one of the party. Her requeſt was reluctantly complied with, and Mr. Budenal conducted the other two ladies to the carriage. It was a charming evening, but they ſhortened their ride in conſideration of Miſs Well's indiſpoſition, and in their return were overtaken by Lord Wentworth, who joined them, ſaying, that buſineſs obliged him to ſet off for town that evening; and that he was coming to Low-Wood to enquire if the ladies had any commands to honor him with. Mrs. Lennard then informed him of their purpoſed departure, adding, that he had much better

ſtay

ſtay, and accompany them; but that, he replied, was impoſſible; and after a few minutes converſation bade them adieu.

This ſecond interview, though ſo ſhort, increaſed Adela's high opinion of his lordſhip, and threw her into a reverie which was interrupted by the obſervation of Mr. Budenal; but to him was productive of no good, as it only made her draw compariſons very little to his advantage. On their return, they found Miſs Wells perfectly recovered of her head-ach; and the manner in which Adela received the aſſiduities of Mr. Budenal, afforded that lady the higheſt ſatisfaction, and rendered her unuſually ſprightly;—as ſhe wiſely reſolved to neglect no probable means of regaining her former fancied empire over him; but vain were all her efforts to bring the wanderer back; he ſeemed ſcarcely to poſſeſs the ſenſe of hearing or ſeeing for any other object than Adela: he hung over the back of her chair, and again repeated his enquiries about her unuſual gravity, with a ſolicitude which betrayed

trayed real anxiety, and diftreffed Adela, as fhe did not wifh to be with him an object of fuch importance; for, from her firft obfervance of his particularity fhe felt an uneafinefs, left it fhould in time become ferious; which, added to fome few recent obfervations, was the real caufe of that depreffion of fpirits, which Mr. Budenal increafed by rendering confpicuous; and fhe ardently wifhed for an opportunity of retiring from obfervation to indulge the painful emotions of her heart; which her endeavours to conceal, ferved only to augment.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. Lennard entered the apartment of Adela the next morning, ere fhe was ftirring; and accounted for this unfeafonably appearance, by faying, " fhe had omited

omitted to inform her the evening before, that an early hour was fixed on for their departure, and that breakfaſt now waited." Adela inſtantly obeyed her ſummons; and they were ſoon joined by Mr. Budenal. The carriage was ordered; and they bade adieu to the delightful ſhades of Low-wood. The various reflections that crouded the mind of Adela, when Mr. Budenal aſſiſted her into the coach, deprived her for ſome moments of recollection; but on turning her attention to Mrs. Lennard, ſhe obſerved more than common pleaſure ſparkling in her fine blue eyes, while the countenance of Mr. Budenal ſpoke the language of yeſterday; and Miſs Wells ſat ſilent, anxiouſly watching the looks of that gentleman: for with regard to him, ſhe was well verſed in the art of phyſiognomy.—" Well," exclaimed Mrs. Lennard, " I feel very happy at the idea of again ſeeing the dear town, and it is only in compliance with cuſtom that I ever leave it;—for the country in my opinion, is fit only to indulge in miſery; and

after the two firſt days the moſt agreeable ſociety cannot render it to me ſupportable." "And do you not like Low-Wood, Madam," ſaid Adela. "I think the place," returned Mrs. Lennard, "very well adapted for the abode of a hermit, and believe it may abound in beauties to thoſe whoſe taſte lies that way; but I have no reliſh for ſtill life, and leaving thoſe connexions to their ſublimity, feel more delight in ſeeing an elegant drawing-room well filled, than all that the purling ſtreams and flowery meads in the univerſe can impart. I prefer an opera to all the boaſted notes of Philomela." "Perhaps," continued ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to Adela, "you pity the depravity of my taſte; but it is formed by education and habit; and if it is an error, I am well aſſured I ſhall never get rid of it." "We ſeldom ſee two people of taſte exactly ſimilar, Madam," replied Adela, "they differ as much as our perſons;—but I am a very inſufficient judge of propriety in what you allude to; for hitherto I have been witneſs only

only to the charms of rural life." "True, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Lennard, "but I am greatly miſtaken, if you don't very ſoon admit the charms of gay life to be infinitely ſuperior." "Perhaps," ſaid Mr. Budenal, (who had been lounging in one corner of the coach, earneſtly attentive to their converſation) "Miſs Northington's taſte is already fixed too deeply to admit of any change." "People frequently think their taſte is fixed," exclaimed Miſs Wells, who ſat biting her lips, and had never uttered one ſyllable till now, ſince their departure) or at leaſt endeavour to perſuade others it is ſo, when a mere trifle ſoon makes the deception evident; and this I think ſhould teach us all to be rather ſlow in yielding our belief, or forming our reſolutions." "I hope," rejoined Mr. Budenal, "Miſs Wells can have no reaſon to lament any change of taſte." "Who, me?" returned the lady with quickneſs, and a face of the colour of crimſon, "No really, I only ſpeak of inſtances I have ſeen; not of any in which I

have

have ever been concerned; I am quite happy in that refpect; no perfon living can be more fo." "That is a very lucky circumftance," returned Mr. Budenal, looking archly, "for a capricious tafte is often productive of very difagreeable confequences; and it would give me great concern, were I confcious of poffeffing it; but if I know any thing of my own heart, it is the very reverfe; its predilections are, I fear, too permanent for the peace of its owner."—As he uttered thofe words, he looked at Adela in a manner which fufficiently explained their meaning. Mifs Wells vouchfafed him no anfwer, but by a very contemptuous look, and addreffing herfelf to Mrs. Lennard, they entered on a converfation in which drefs amufements, and many other fafhionable topics, were thoroughly difcuffed; but here, ignorance in thofe important matters enjoined filence to Adela; Mr. Budenal alfo engaged her attention by talking on fubjects which he judged would be to her far more agreeable: he pointed out the beauties of

the varying landſcapes in the moſt pleaſing manner, and deſcribed every villa which they paſſed, adding many curious anecdotes of their ſeveral owners; nor did he fail during the deſcriptions to laviſh encomiums delicately flattering on the elegance of Adela's taſte, and the refinement that accompanied every ſentiment ſhe uttered.

On their arrival in Hanover-Square, Adela found ſufficient room for obſervation and aſtoniſhment. " How different," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe followed Mrs. Lennard to the drawing-room—" is the humble dwelling of Mr. Smith;" but reaſon added, " perhaps it is productive (at leaſt) of equal happineſs;" and memory preſented her with the whole ſcene, embelliſhed with the ſmiling faces of her youthful friends. The colourings of fancy were, however, too powerful; and ſhe dropped a tear to the remembrance of felicity, which in the ſome degree could never return. " Will you favour me with that enchanting air which I once heard you play at Low-Wood?" ſaid

Mrs. Lennard, (as Adela was admiring a harpſichord that ſtood in the ſaloon). She complied; and accompanying it with her voice, warbled out the following words of Shenſtone.

I.

In airy dreams oft fancy flies,
My abſent Love to ſee;
And at the early dawn I riſe,
Dear youth, to think on thee.

II.

How ſwiftly flew the bliſsful hours,
While love and youth were new!
Sweet as the bloom of op'ning flower,
But ah! as tranſient too.

Mr. Budenal and Miſs Wells entered as ſhe was ſinging the laſt verſe. He placed himſelf behind her chair, ſaying to Mrs. Lennard in a low voice.—" Can any mortal mixture of Earth's mould — breathe out divine

divine enchanting ravishment? "It is enough to draw the bright musicians from their native skies." Then taking out his pencil, he traced the following lines:

While charm'd to silence, list'ning we adore,
Sweet Adela, thy melodious art;
Where harmony exerts its sovereign power,
To fix with rapture the enchanted heart.

The silv'ry strings, so graceful, swept along,
Bid mute attention dwell on every note:
But oh! to this when joined your angel-song,
Celestial warblings seem around to float.

Like airs from Heaven—the modulations glide,
Sweetly entranc'd, the ravish'd spirits move;
'Tis your's, the soul transported thus to guide,
Whose voice is music—and whose looks—are love.

Mrs. Lennard smiled at the rapturous effusion. Adela heard it; and as soon as she had finished, arose from the instrument

covered with blufhes. " You touch the harpfichord with a tafte that aftonifhes me;" faid Mrs. Lennard, " and does honor to your inftructer whoever he was; for nothing but the ftronger demonftration could convince me that fo great a proficiency could be made in that admirable fcience, in fuch a remote fpot as Barton." " My mother," replied Adela, " was my chief, though not my firft inftructor; and fhe was generally allowed to poffefs uncommon excellence in that art." " Excellence! Madam," faid Mr. Budenal, " is not confined to any particular fpot, but muft ever bloom where nature has fcattered with a lavifh hand her choiceft gifts." " But I think with fo exquifite a tafte for mufic as Mifs Northington is bleffed with, fhe might ftill be infinitely improved," returned Mrs. Lennard. " It does not appear to me poffible," replied Mr. Budenal. " Ho, ho!" drawled out Mifs Wells, " You furely are not fo unreafonable, Madam, as to expect fincerity from Mr. Budenal?—why it is a language

he

he makes it an invariable rule to expel; I ſuppoſe for ſome miſdemeanor it has been guilty of." Then both ladies laughed. Mr. Budenal replied only by a low bow; but it was evident he did not reliſh the ſarcaſm.

The entrance of Lord Wentworth now gave a turn to the converſation: he ſpent the evening with them; and ſo highly agree-able was his converſation to Adela. Though his attention was chiefly confined to Mrs. Lennard, that Mr. Budenal with all his rhetoric and all his aſſiduity, was almoſt totally diſregarded; and when Adela was ſeated at her evening toilette, his lordſhip's image did not paſs unheeded through the throng.

CHAPTER VI.

UNACCUSTOMED to the guidance of faſhion, Adela aroſe at the uſual hour. She went down ſtairs: all was ſilence, not a ſervant in the houſe had yet thrown off the fetters of indolence: ſhe ſtrolled into the garden, and entering a ſmall temple at the end of it, took a book from one of the ſhelves. It was a volume of the immortal Shakeſpeare. The friendſhip, the uncommon attachment of Cælia and Roſsalind, amuſed the hour; and on returning to the houſe, ſhe found Miſs Wells in the breakfaſt parlour: Adela went up ſtairs, and found Mrs. Lennard at the important duties of the toilette. When ſhe related her ramble in the garden, Mrs. Lennard laughed exceedingly at her ruſticity, ſaying, "do you ſuppoſe, child, we riſe at day-break to ſkim milk and feed the poultry, like the good ladies in Wiltſhire? I hope you will ſoon loſe thoſe primitive cuſtoms, and adopt

adopt your hours and manners to the ſphere in which you muſt now move; otherwiſe you will make a miſerable figure in our world. In the country, indeed, I ſometimes appear at ſtrange hours myſelf: but here, I would not be ſeen at ſuch unfaſhionable ſeaſons for the univerſe. However,' continued ſhe, ſmiling, "we will initiate you into our myſteries, and I have not a doubt but you will *ſoon* be as well ſkilled as any of us." Adela ſmiled—"Come," continued Mrs. Lennard, "I will ſhew you ſome of my gew-gaws; Le Roche, bring me my box of millinery that came laſt from Paris; and inform Miſs Wells we ſhall breakfaſt here." The maid diſappeared, and in a few moments returned laden with finery. "Now, my dear," ſays Mrs. Lennard, "I will ſhew you the moſt divine caps you have ever ſet your eyes on." Mrs. Le Roche then began to diſplay her genius, by haranguing moſt eloquently on the various beauties of each, as ſhe took them out of the box. "Is'n't this a ſweet cap, Ma'em!

'Tis the very pattern which the French Queen wore on the King's laſt birth-day. But here's a moſt lovely half-dreſs, Ma'am; now this, Ma'am, is quite the *Gout*—Is'n't it a ſweet cap, Ma'am?" But to all this, Adela ſcarcely made any reply, than the monoſyllable, "yes". As ſhe was incapable of enumerating the various charms which thoſe airy vanities were ſaid to poſſeſs; the entrance of breakfaſt proved a moſt welcome relief from the diſſertations of Le Roche, and the ſtrictures of Miſs Wells, and Mrs. Lennard. "If you approve of the millinery you have juſt ſeen Miſs Northington," ſaid Mrs. Lennard, as they ſat at breakfaſt, "which came from Paris while I was at Low-Wood, they ſhall immediately be ſent to your dreſſing-room; for in my opinion, nothing can be more elegant." "I am not poſſeſſed of taſte enough, Madam," replied Adela, "to have any choice in thoſe reſpects, but am content to be guided by yours." "Well," rejoined Mrs. Lennard, "then you ſhall have them,

for

for I think nothing can be better chofen; and my hair-dreffer will foon be here, whofe affiftance you ftand greatly in need of, as well as that of the mantua maker; for it is impoffible you can fee any of our vifiters in your prefent habiliments—they are fo very *outré*. It would amaze you to fee how Mrs. Edgeley, or Mifs Grillard, (two of our greateft fafhionifts) would ftare at you." "Indeed Madam," returned Adela, fmiling, "I am greatly indebted to you for being fo folicitous to prevent it; and" — "Oh," interrupted Mrs Lennard, eagerly, "it would diftrefs me beyond expreffion to hear any fault found with your drefs; for as you are fuppofed to be unacquainted with the rules of tafte, it would all reflect on me."—

A fervant now entering announced the hair-dreffer; and Adela, for the firft time, fat down to have her beautiful treffes tortured into fafhion. The man was liberal of his encomiums; and declared that after being dreffed a few times, it would appear to

much

much greater advantage. However, flattery and faſhion, great as their influence generally are, were inſufficient to reconcile Adela to the pain ſhe endured from the twiſting and torturing which is introduced by art, to deform the beauties of nature. Mr. Budenal was now announced; but Adela retiring to her own apartment he made but a ſhort ſtay; and when ſhe returned to Mrs. Lennard's dreſſing-room, ſhe found Lord Wentworth and Doctor Alton, (Mrs. Lennard's phyſician) attendants on the toilette. The latter regarded her very attentively, perhaps ſuppoſing, from the bloom which adorned her cheek, that ſhe was not likely to want much of his aſſiſtance. Lord Wentworth made many enquiries reſpecting ſome families he had known in Wiltſhire; and when Adela mentioned Mr. Smith, his lordſhip ſaid, he had known him very well, as he was, previouſly to his having the living of Barton, preceptor to the eldeſt ſon of Mr. Rhodes, the moſt intimate friend of his father; to whom

he made a long viſit while Mr. Smith was a part of the family. "And," added he, "it was the opinion of many, that in perſon I bore ſome reſemblance to that gentleman." "The likeneſs ſtruck me the firſt time I had the pleaſure of ſeeing your lordſhip," ſaid Adela, and applied to Mrs. Lennard for her opinion; but ſhe thought differently, adding, "had it been a mental reſemblance, indeed, it might be more juſt, for I have a very high opinion of Mr. Smith's character." "I have always thought," ſaid his lordſhip, "thoſe who likened me to Mr. Smith, paid me much too high a compliment." "Ah!" replied Mrs. Lennard, "you modeſt men never ſpeak the language of your heart." "And do you number me in that claſs, Madam?" "Indeed, I think you the principal of all I know, for it is certainly not a very numerous body.' "You do me honor," returned his Lordſhip, "for I eſteem modeſty as valuable a quality in our ſex as it is univerſally allowed to be in yours. But the charge

of infincerity I would gladly difpence with. You are much too profound for my penetration, but"— The entrance of Mr. Budenal with two ladies made her forget the reft. Thefe were the very identical ladies of whofe ftrictures on drefs Mrs. Lennard ftood in fuch awe.

Mifs Grillard entered the room with a half run, and feizing Mrs. Lennard's hand, "my fweet creature,"—faid fhe, "I am perfectly tranfported at feeing you again: I have had the horrors ever fince you left us; Lord! what could poffefs you to ftay moping fo long in the frightful country? "Blefs me! I don't think you look well,—that Norfolk air is not good for the complexion, I believe; for I obferve you alter ftrangely when you go there;—heavens preferve me from feeing it!—Six Weeks there! Lord help you, child!—Was not your patience quite exhaufted? I fhould have been dead in half the time." She now ftopped to gain a little breath; and Mrs. Lennard replied, (looking archly at Lord

Wentworth)

Wentworth) "why indeed, Miſs Grillard, my patience is ſometimes put ſeverely to the teſt." During this conference, poor Mrs. Edgeley was waiting with great impatience to offer her congratulations; and had with eager looks tried every method to ſqueeze in a word, but without effect. Miſs Grillard would not ceaſe one inſtant for any body; but as ſoon as a truce was obtained from that talkative lady, Mrs. Edgeley approached with a very formal courteſy, ſaying, (with her mouth ſcrewed into a great variety of forms) "really Madam I am extremely rejoiced to ſee you again in town; you have made a much longer ſtay then uſual at Low-Wood; but your appearance aſſures me you are well, for you look moſt divinely." "I am obliged to you, Madam, for the compliment, returned Mrs. Lennard, "but your gay friend here is of quite a different opinion,' turning to Miſs Grillard) "for ſhe thinks I look very ill.' "*Jehou!*" exclaimed Mrs. Edgeley, "I believe ſhe will not find any body

elſe to eſpouſe her ſide of the queſtion." "I have a right to give my opinion, I ſuppoſe, Madam, as well as other people," replied Miſs Grillard with tartneſs. "Undoubtedly; and I have a right to differ from you, I ſuppoſe," rejoined Mrs. Edgeley, while anger dyed her face with ſcarlet. Every face in the room was diſtorted with laughter: but Mrs. Lennard interrupted the diſputants, (fearful that they would really quarrel about her looks,) by introducing Adela to their acquaintance. This produced perfect harmony, and all their attention was turned to the new object.

Miſs Grillard ſeated herſelf next Adela, and teazed her with numerous queſtions, which ſhe was unable to anſwer; and would have been very diſtreſſing, had not Mr. Budenal who ſat on her other ſide, afforded her a conſiderable relief by engaging ſome of that lady's attention: however ſhe took an exact inventory of Adela's perſon and dreſs, and made ſome very curious animadverſions on both; while Miſs Wells and

Doctor Alton were engaged in a very profound and l arned conversation; in which the Doctor displayed his great abilities to the utmost advantage, ornamenting the discourse with a profusion of wise hems and hahs, which in his own opinion, added considerable grace to the harangue, but afforded very little entertainment to Miss Wells: who only listened to him because no other addressed her: for her favourite Budenal was perfectly fascinated, and Lord Wentworth always directed the chief part of his attention to Mrs. Lennard, from no other cause but a fear if that most formidable imputation of being in love; for he always appeared more hurt at being thought to have a susceptible heart, then the generality of his sex are at the discovery of real faults. "To be made wretched by the smiles of a baby-face," he would often say, "is a weakness I despise: I esteem the deserving part of the sex, and admire the conversation of the agreeable; they soften the rougher mind of man, improve his manners, and

are

are the animaters of human life. As ſuch, I think their ſociety deſirable; but that romantic paſſion ſo much talked of, is only the air-bred phantom of a vacant mind." Thus argued the philoſophic Wentworth, and powerfully did his friend Budenal oppoſe the doctrine. It was the ſource of perpetual diſputes between them; and the former was often reminded, when every other argument failed. "That time would bring its conviction, for his hour was not yet come."

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER Miſs Grillard had ſatisfied her curioſity with reſpect to Adela, ſhe joined her friend Mrs. Edgeley; and good humour being perfectly reſtored, they amuſed Mrs. Lennard by relating ſome very intereſting events that had happened during her ſtay at Low-Wood.

" La, my dear Ma'am," ſaid Miſs Grillard, " have you not heard of the moſt aſtoniſhing fracas, between Sir James Wimple and his lady? Bleſs me! I thought all the world had known that.—Why, Ma'am, they are abſolutely ſeparated!—Lord! it is a moſt amazing affair! You've ſeen Lady Wimple, my dear? She's a fine woman, you know; quite the *ton*; would not deviate from the ſettled rules of taſte to ſave her whole family from deſtruction. Well, to be ſure ſhe is a charming woman,—a woman of ſpirit; you know, I always venerate a woman of ſpirit. It muſt be owned, her ladyſhip has an infinitude of faults; but when I think of her preſent diſtreſs,—I forget them all: ſo I'll endeavour to recollect the ſtory; and I am ſure, you muſt applaud her conduct."

" You know, ſhe has nothing vulgar about her; and of conſequence, ſhe always deſpiſed her huſband moſt heartily, who, it muſt be owned is a plodding, horrid creature, always talking of paying his debts, living

within

within bounds, and railing againſt faſhion and taſte; and would you believe it? he once averred in my hearing, that he knew many ladies of faſhion who were no better then compounds of extravagance, vanity and folly loaded with expenſive trappings, and daubed with paint: their minds filled with a jumble of noiſe, nonſenſe, and vice: they will liſten unmoved to the tale of woe, while their boſoms beat with anxiety to run the giddy round of pleaſure. He added many illiberal reflections, but I cannot remember them; for you may ſuppoſe, I was quite out of patience. Did you ever hear ſuch a wretch? His lady was extremely hurt at his rudeneſs; for you know, ſhe is much ſuperior to him in every reſpect. She brought him a much larger fortune than he was entitled to; beſides her being an earl's daughter, and ſhe certainly is highly to be commended for ſupporting her rank with propriety. But the brute now complains that her extravagance has ruined him; and has often told her that his creditors are

ſo

ſo clamorous, that he will ſhortly be in a jail, if they do not retrench; but as ſhe has very juſtly obſerved, how is that poſſible for a woman in her ſtyle?—And ſo, when his Grace the Duke of ***** was married, (who is her near relation) ſhe ſent for her jeweller, and gave him an order,—which ſhe told me herſelf did not exceed 2000*l.* but Sir James happening to be preſent when they were brought home, ſtormed like a madman, made the jeweller take back his goods charging him never to credit her ladyſhip for a farthing again; and in his rage, threw her beautiful little lap dog (which ſhe prized next her own life) out of the window. This almoſt deprived her ladyſhip of her ſenſes: ſhe raved in return at this barbarous man, vowed ſhe never would live another day with him, and immediately went to her brother's.—Her eldeſt daughter who is a lovely girl, the image of her mother both in perſon and mind, accompanied her; and Sir James with all the reſt of his family are gone into

the countiy. The disappointment of her jewels added to the cruel fate of her darling Ponto has affected her ladyship so deeply, that she is now confined with a delirious fever, and her recovery is scarcely expected. Unhappy lady! I am sure you will join with me in lamenting her misfortunes, and detesting the wretch who has caused them."

"It is certainly most melancholy," replied Mrs. Lennard, "but I hope it will not prove fatal to her ladyship." "Ah! it will most assuredly, Madam," said Mrs. Edgeley looking ruefully.—"But I suppose you know Lord ——— is married to the daughter of a poor clergyman, with nothing but beauty and sense to recommend her: it is an astonishing piece of madness. Miss Laurel called on me this morning, on purpose to relate the whole affair; for she knows the truth of it: and it seems, his lordship has been united to this girl near three years, but durst not avow it till the death of his father. This explains his fondness for the country; and his rejecting

an alliance with lady Harriet Foible, which every body wondered at extremely. He has now brought his dowdy to town; but they tell me it is a poor inſipid being, that never can make any figure in the polite world. Not that I vouch it for truth, I only ſpeak from report; but if matters are not exaggerated, his lordſhip certainly deſerves to be baniſhed from all good company, for holding forth ſuch an example to our young men of faſhion. Why we ſhall (if they go on at this rate) have all our milk maids metamorphoſed into fine ladies."

Miſs Grillard and her friend obſerving that they had ten thouſand viſits to pay before dinner, took their leave. The gentlemen ſoon followed their example, telling Mrs. Lennard that they hoped to profit by the well-timed hint of Mrs. Edgeley.

CHAPTER VIII.

ADELA was following her patroneſs up ſtairs; her imagination buſied in retracing the occurrences of the morning, when a complaint uttered in feeble, tremulous accents, caught her ear.—" Indeed, I am not one of thoſe" (ſaid a voice which ſeemed to be a female's); I have a father now expiring for want of the neceſſaries of life: I beſeech you let me ſee your lady; it is all I aſk." And that I ſha'nt grant,' replied the footman roughly, " do you think, I want to loſe my place for you? Why, there is ſuch a tribe of you ſwarming about, that it takes up half one's time to give you anſwers.—Come, I wiſh you'd troop, and not hinder me with your cant." She ſighed deeply. Adela deſcended the ſtairs with quickneſs. The woman was leaving the door. " Stop her, ſtop her;" ſaid ſhe eagerly, " call her back." The footman obeyed. She was young, and it was evident,

had

had been beautiful; but her pallid countenance now ſpoke the complicated ravages of poverty and illneſs. She tottered, and could ſcarcely ſupport her feeble frame. "Let me ſpeak a few words with you," ſaid Adela, going into the parlour. The woman followed, and attempted to ſpeak, but her tongue refuſed its office; ſhe nearly fainted; Adela led her to a chair,—ſhe ſoon recovered.—"Oh! angelic lady forgive me," ſaid the unhappy ſufferer, claſping her hands,—"compoſe yourſelf," replied Adela; "my power is very limited, but ſtill I may be your friend: I will endeavour to relieve your wants." A ſhower of tears acknowledged the obligation thoſe words conferred. The young woman took a paper from her pocket: "be pleaſed, Madam," ſaid ſhe, "to read this; it contains the ſimple tale of my diſtreſs, I am unable to repeat it." She again ſighed,—and aroſe to depart. Adela took out a purſe, it was the gift of Mr. Smith, and contained little, but it was all ſhe had. "The contents of

this," ſaid ſhe, "may relieve your preſent wants, but I muſt have the purſe again; let me ſee you if poſſible, early to-morrow morning." The woman promiſed to comply with this requeſt. The precious tear of ſenſibility quivered in the eye of Adela as ſhe left the room, and in the opinion of true diſcernment, heigthened its beauty infinitely more then all the treaſures of Indoſtan.

Adela was croſſing the lobby with the paper in her hand, when meeting the footman, "I hope, Miſs," ſaid he, "you will not let my lady know of that beggar woman's being in the parlour.' "Why, if I ſhould," replied Adela, who was diſguſted with him, from what ſhe had herſelf heard, "her anger would certainly be very great on being informed of your extreme cruelty to an object of diſtreſs." "I don't know as for that, Ma'am," returned the man, "I am but a new ſervant here; but I have loſt three places about thoſe things; and as the ſaying is, "a burnt child dreads the fire."

"I can

" I can ſcarcely credit what you ſay," replied Adela: " however, in the preſent caſe, I give you my word, you ſhall be no ſufferer;' and haſtened to her apartment to peruſe the following.

" Appeal to the heart:"

" A wretched daughter humbly ſupplicates aſſiſtance for a dying parent. Dying amidſt the horrors of a dungeon; open ſome hoſpitable door; merciful diſpoſer of all things! incline ſome charitable heart to ſave my father! not for myſelf, but for him I plead. Death is the only refuge I can hope for; but oh! let not my honoured parent die from want."

" What method can I take to relieve this poor unhappy ſufferer?" ſaid Adela, laying down the paper. " I can only implore the aſſiſtance of others for her, and that I will inſtantly do. May heaven inſpire me with eloquence. She haſtened to Mrs. Lennard, and her conduct met with the applauſe it merited, for benevolence poſſeſſed a large ſhare in the mind of that

lady,

lady, though its gentle whiſpers were often drowned by the tumultuous jargon of diſſipation.

"You are an excellent creature," ſaid ſhe to Adela; "beſtow this trifle as you think proper. It was a ſum not inconſiderable. "I will apply it to comfort the afflicted, Madam," replied Adela, while joy animated every feature.

They ſaw no more company for that day; Adela employed the remainder of it in anſwering two long letters from Wiltſhire: one full of affection and friendly counſel from Mrs. Smith; the other from Louiſa Amſbury, deſcribing in moſt pathetic language her diſtreſs for the loſs of her amiable friend. As Adela peruſed thoſe teſtimonies of true regard, the tear of ſympathy bedewed her cheek, and her anſwers conveyed the genuine ſentiments of a heart glowing with grateful affection. But the traces of melancholy which remained, did not eſcape the piercing obſervation of Mr. Budenal; he anxiouſly watched her looks, enquired

enquired if ſhe was not well; and ſighed ſo eloquently, that there was little occaſion for words to explain her meaning. But Miſs Wells who had been lately ſo inconſolable, was now greatly comforted by the aſſiduities of Doctor Thurley, who had long avowed a *penchant* for her: and though in times paſt, ſhe had frowned contempt on his gallantry; prudence now whiſpered, "hold him in fetters, till you make a more pleaſing conqueſt." And as this old-faſhioned lady is ſometimes a uſeful friend, her dictates were not now totally diſregarded.

CHAPTER IX.

ADELA's viſiter was punctual to her appointment. Gratitude beamed through the heavy clouds of ſorrow with which ſhe was ſurrounded. She ſtrove repeatedly to expreſs her thanks, but in vain;

ſhe only wept them. "How is your father?" ſaid Adela. "He ſtill lives, Madam; you have lengthened the thread of his exiſtence." "Do not aſcribe to me," returned Adela, "that to which I am not entitled. If the Almighty, through me, has relieved your diſtreſs; to him let your gratitude be directed; I am but the humble inſtrument of his mercy. But where is the place of your abode? May I, without adding to your diſtreſs, ſee your father?" A hectic of a moment croſſed the cheek of her to whom this requeſt was made. "Do not miſtake me," continued Adela; "it is not the impulſe of curioſity, but a wiſh of being more uſeful to you; though I am your ſiſter in poverty, yet there are others acquainted with your ſufferings, and I am well aſſured they will, if poſſible, reſtore to happineſs you and your father."

"Dear good lady! oh! I am incapable of telling you what paſſes here," replied the young woman, laying her hand on her breaſt. "My father! yes my father may

be

be happy,—when his poor Ezalinda is laid in her ſilent grave." She looked up to heaven,—" There only,' continued ſhe, " I expect peace." She ſeemed loſt; but after a ſhort interval of ſilence, " can you, Madam, venture into the dreadful abode that contains my parent? can heaven-born charity make you wiſh to viſit the dreary receſs, where cruelty, and iron hearted avarice has confined a man ſurely deſerving of a better lot? Oh! inhuman huſband! if it is poſſible, mayeſt thou be forgiven!" She was extremely agitated. Mrs. Lennard entered the room.—" I am going to pay a viſit," ſaid Adela. " Will you not breakfaſt firſt?" enquired Mrs. Lennard, " impoſſible, Madam," returned the ſweet girl; " here is a much more powerful inducement," taking the embaraſſed Ezalinda by the hand. " Willingly would I accompany you," rejoined Mrs. Lennard, " but delicacy forbids." Adela acquieſced in this opinion, and was going; but in compliance with the

wiſh of Mrs Lennard they waited while the carriage was got ready.

When they arrived at the priſon, Adela with hurried ſteps followed her trembling conductreſs. She entered an apartment wretched in the extremeſt degree: the beams of day ſcarcely glimmered around it. She approached a miſerable bed that ſtood in one corner. And opening the curtain, "how is my dear father?" ſaid ſhe. "Better, much better, my love;" replied a feeble voice. She took his hand in her's. "The fever is quite gone, I hope," continued ſhe; "and here (pointing to Adela) the gentle meſſenger of heaven come to viſit you." "Alas! what return can we ever make to ſuch unexampled goodneſs; but ſhe looks to a higher reward," replied the father claſping the hand of his child, "and ſhe will meet with it; but perhaps, not here. This, my Ezalinda is not the home of the virtuous." "I fear you will exhauſt yourſelf again," returned his daughter, and addreſſing herſelf to Adela, "Madam," ſaid ſhe, "this

ſcene

ſcene may injure you." "No," replied Adela, ſtriving to conceal her emotions, "but I would ſpeak to your father, if you think the ſight of a ſtranger would not affect him too ſenſibly." "A common ſtranger might, Madam; but of you there can be no fear," returned ſhe. Leading Adela to the bed-ſide, his emaciated countenance ſhocked her; but ſummoning up all her reſolution, "I rejoice to hear you are better, Sir," ſaid ſhe. "Young lady," replied the unfortunate man, "I cannot thank you,—indeed I cannot—but there is one (looking at his daughter) that knows my heart; ſhe will do it for me." He half raiſed himſelf, and with great eagerneſs was going to ſay more; but Adela interrupted him, ſaying, ſhe only begged to know the ſum for which he was a priſoner. He ſighed. "My Ezalinda," ſaid he, giving his daughter a key, "will find the treacherous paper. Oh! bitter reflection!" Ezalinda obeyed, while ſilent anguiſh ſeemed to ſhake her care-worn form. It was a

bond for ninety pounds. Adela arofe to depart, affuring them that they fhould in a few hours hear from her again. " Stop, Madam," faid the father, " you know not on whom you thus lavifh your bounty." " Believe me," replied Adela, " I only act for another; but I have no doubts; deception, I am well affured, dwells not here." He fpoke to his daughter in a low voice: fhe took a fealed pacquet from a fmall box. " There, Madam, is the fimple narrative of both our lives: we are indeed no deceivers, but cruelly deceived." She feated herfelf on the bed, and wept in agony.

After ufing every argument fhe thought likely to afford confolation, Adela haftened from this inhofpitable roof, while her heart bled for the woe fhe had witneffed; and being feated in the carriage, fhe opened the pacquet, which contained the following narration of facts.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.

BORN in the lap of affluence, in one of the moſt delightful countries in England, the darling ſon of an indulgent father, the favorite of all around me. Till I attained my twentieth year I lived without care; and by nature bleſſed with a diſpoſition peculiarly happy, I conjured up no fancied ills, but with gratiude enjoyed the preſent good. Thus flew my days winged with delight. My chief amuſement was ſtudy, and I made a rapid progreſs in every part of uſeful and polite learning.

About this time a young lady, the only daughter of a neighbouring gentleman was introduced to our family. She was beautiful, ſenſible, and lively. Her ſociety amuſed me; I chatted, laughed, danced, and ſung with her: we were ſeldom aſunder, and ſeemed reciprocally pleaſed.

My father obſerving my fondneſs for her company concluded ſhe had caught my

 heart.

heart. The connection was (in the language of the world) deſirable; he enquired very ſeriouſly, if I was not attached to Miſs Parker? ſurpriſed at the queſtion, I anſwered in the negative. "Perhaps you prefer ſome other," ſaid my father. I aſſured him, I did not. "Then," rejoined he, "you ſurely cannot object to a union with this amiable girl; when you know her whole ſoul is devoted to you, which ſhe has owned in confidence to your ſiſter; and it ſurely will have ſome weight with you, ſetting aſide the ſatisfaction it will give a parent, whoſe happineſs is wrapt up in yours."

What could I do? My father's goodneſs demanded every return that duty could make. I greatly admired Miſs Parker. I had read, and heard much of love; but I believed it a paſſion too tumultuous to gain admittance into a boſom ſo tranquil as mine; and in compliance with the wiſh of my father, now declared myſelf her lover; and met with a reception which left me no

room

room to doubt the truth of what he had related.

Felicity irradiated her beautiful face with new charms; yet a coldneſs lingered about my heart, and in vain I attempted to ſhake it off.

Preparations were making for our nuptials. A bye-ſtander unacquainted with the real caſe, would have ſuppoſed my father the lover. He was all ardour, I was all indolence; but by my intended bride, this was attributed to my natural diſpoſition: ſo ready are we to believe what we moſt wiſh to be true.

Two young ladies were invited to Trenance a few weeks previous to the time fixed for our marriage; perhaps they were intended for bride-maids. I was at Trenance when they arrived. Miſs Beauverie was in perſon rather plain; but in character what is generally termed a wit. She was poſſeſſed of ſatire without diſcretion; it wounded all around her. She was ſometimes feared, but never loved. I ſhrunk

from her, and turned to the gentle Ezalinda Seymore. She was the very ſoul of complacency and native ſweetneſs. Her ſenſe was ſtrong and refined. Her wit poignant, but guided by delicacy and judgment, was only aimed at vice in all its various forms.

Nature never formed a more perfect model of feminine perfection; and what added a brilliancy to every charm, was that politeneſs which education alone can never impart, though it may improve. It was that ardent wiſh of rendering all around her happy, which never fails of being its own reward.

Her perſon I cannot deſcribe. It was the proper abode of ſuch a ſoul; ſuch as in imagination I had often aſcribed to the bright inhabitants above. There was an expreſſion in her countenance, of which no pen can convey a juſt idea: it ſeemed to me an emanation of ſomething more than mortal. She was much older than Miſs Parker. I compared the giddy levity of the one with the elegant manners, the

awakened

awakened fenſibility, and the ten thouſand nameleſs graces of the other; and love ſighed out, " Ah! what a difference." Yes, that evening, the calm ſun ſhine of my mind hitherto unruffled, was over clouded. I loved; fondly, paſſionately doted on Miſs Seymore. I was never abſent from Trenance: every day increaſed the ardour of my paſſion for the charming Ezalinda; and I mourned inceſſantly my unfortunate engagement; but Miſs Parker's fond attachment determined me, and I reſolved to ſacrifice love to honor.

One evening walking in the delightful gardens which ſurrounded Trenance, we entered a grotto. " I wiſh your guittar was here, Maria." ſaid Miſs Beauverie. Miſs Parker ran back to the houſe, and returned with it. She played ſeveral tunes; and gave the inſtrument to Miſs Seymore, begging ſhe would follow her example. The ſweet girl readily complied. She excelled in every accompliſhment; ſhe played an air ſweetly plaintive; it affected herſelf;

I could not well bear it. We ſtayed here beyond our uſual time. Miſs Parker was the emblem of happineſs. The repartees of Miſs Melvin made us laugh. Miſs Seymore appeared cheerful; but I fancied it was only aſſumed. I once or twice obſerved her buried in thought.

A ſervant ſummoned us to ſupper. We quitted the grotto haſtily; and Miſs Seymore in pulling out her handkerchief dropped a letter. I took it up unobſerved, and put it in my pocket. It was without ſeal or ſuperſcription, from my adored Ezalinda to her ſiſter; and contained little more then a deſcription of myſelf in language which convinced me I muſt have ſome intereſt in the heart of the writer. I preſſed the paper to my lips a thouſand times; and early the next morning haſtening to Trenance, I found Miſs Seymore alone in the breakfaſt-parlour. She was amuſing herſelf at Miſs Parker's harpſichord. I threw down the letter with a careleſs air, ſaying, I had juſt found it as I paſſed through the garden;

but knew not to whom it belonged. " It is mine," ſaid ſhe eagerly. I have this morning ſought every part of the garden in vain for it. I intended to have ſaid more; but a variety of cauſes tied my tongue. We were both embarraſſed. I aſked her to favour me with that enchanting air ſhe played in the grotto. But oh! wretched Frederic! it only increaſed thy diſtreſs. I could not thank her. I traverſed the room like a lunatic, and the lovely girl looked at me with ſurpriſe. " Are you not well, Mr. Neville?" ſhe enquired. " No, Madam; nor never ſhall again, I fear." The other two ladies entered the room. I complained of a ſudden indiſpoſition; nor was it a pretence; the tumultuous ſtate of my mind added to want of reſt, made me really ill. Miſs Parker was alarmed. Anxiety marked the features of my charming Ezalinda; and Miſs Beauverie amuſed herſelf greatly at my expence: but her raillery ever ill-timed, was now inſufferable; and as ſoon as breakfaſt was removed, I took my leave. In a

few hours I was in a high fever; a delirium took place; and the firſt interval of reaſon I had, I ſaw Miſs Parker ſtanding by my bed-ſide in tears. I ſpoke to her; ſhe ſeemed rejoiced to find my reaſon reſtored; but ſtill ſhe wept.

The firſt object my recollection ſaught was Miſs Seymore; and thoughtleſs of all elſe, I inſtantly enquired for her. "She has left us." ſaid Miſs Parker ſobbing. "Left you?" repeated I. "Where, where is ſhe gone?" She made no reply. I turned to my ſiſter, and made the ſame enquiry; and was informed, that ſhe had been obliged to leave Trenance by indiſpoſition. "She is dead, I ſuppoſe?" ſaid I, ſtarting up in my bed. This idea dwelt on my mind,—and the delirium returned.

After a ſtruggle very ſevere, youth, and a conſtitution naturally good, conquered my diſorder. I recovered; and ſoon found that Miſs Parker was no ſtranger to my unfortunate attachment to her friend. During my illneſs I had publiſhed it to all

around

around me. But the affection of Miſs Parker was not to be ſubdued; ſhe declared it could end but with her life; and afford to give me the moſt diſintereſted, the moſt noble proof of it. She abſolutely refuſed to marry me;—and entreated me to embrace happineſs by an union with Miſs Seymore, whoſe heart was all my own. I could not but feel a pleaſure at this intelligence; but reſolving not to be out-done in generoſity by the excellent Maria, I abſolutely refuſed to follow her advice, and entreated her to fulfil her engagement; but this with great delicacy ſhe as peremptorily rejected. Her amiable, her diſintereſted conduct, aſtoniſhed me; it ſecured my warmeſt eſteem; and I earneſtly ſolicited her to fulfil that promiſe ſo repeatedly given: my father and my ſiſter (whom Miſs Parker fondly loved) ſeconded my arguments: her heart too ſpoke eloquently in my cauſe; and we were married.

But alas! this blaze of heroiſm was ſoon extinguiſhed. The image of Ezalinda Sey-

returned, and took poſſeſſion of my ſoul. Soon after our marriage we went to Bath. There we met the charming girl ill; but more then ever lovely. Never was there a more wretched,—yet never a more attentive huſband. But my unhappy Maria was not to be deceived; ſhe ſaw and partook of my wretchedneſs. We left Bath: our parting with Miſs Seymore was truly affecting. She was addreſſed by a perſonage who had been ſweeping gold duſt from the ſhores of India. He was tall, thin, and might have had a tolerable face, before it was incruſted by forty years reſidence in the eaſt; and a tolerable heart, before it was nearly petrified by the magic power of avarice; Ezalinda Seymore he conceived would make him the happieſt of men. Fain would he have availed himſelf of her poverty, for ſhe was very poor; but finding that impoſſible, he offered her his hand. Her heart rejected the alliance; but her friends argued, and with great reluctance ſhe became his wife.

We

We returned to Trenance; but judge of our aſtoniſhment, on being informed that Mr. Parker was gone to London, and that his houſekeeper had juſt received a meſſage to prepare for the reception of a new miſtreſs. We remained ſome days in a ſtate of ſuſpence, after which the expected pair arrived; The ſurpriſe of Maria was increaſed, in finding Miſs Beauverie was become the Wife of her father. The bride commenced her career with great ſpirit: ſhe ſoon found means to render Trenance irkſome to us. Willingly would I have left it in peace, but that was impoſſible; ſhe was reſolved to quarrel, and ſhe effected it. Her doating huſband eſpouſed her cauſe, and we were forbidden ever to ſee him more.

We now made our home with my father, who uſed every means to make us happy, but in vain. Poor Maria drooped under repeated diſappointments. She gave me a daughter, and was releaſed from all her miſeries. It may ſeem romantic, but I added the name of Ezalinda to that of

Maria, and it endeared the child to my heart.

Mr. Parker apparently mourned the death of his daughter; but cruelly averred that I had by unkindneſs ſhortened her days. He had three children by his young wife; and no intreaty could prevail on him to ſee the orphan of his once darling Maria.

A law ſuit now reduced my father to beggary; it deprived him of his internal eſtate. He did not long ſurvive the blow, and I had nothing but my little Ezalinda in the world. My ſiſter accepted the hand of a worthy clergyman in the neighbourhood, and my brother obtained a commiſſion in the navy. I was in the deepeſt diſtreſs. Bred to no profeſſion, with a child to ſupport, in vain did I apply to her grandfather, in vain did I implore his aſſiſtance for her ſake; he was deaf to all I could ſay, when a better angel ſtepped in, in the form of my once adored Miſs Seymore, then Mrs. Elwin. She heard of our misfortunes, and prevailed on her huſband to viſit us. He offered

offered to take my daughter; and provide for me if I would go to India. I thankfully accepted his offer; and leaving my little darling to the care of the beſt of women, embarked in the next fleet. Proſperity attended me in the eaſt, till an unfortunate quarrel obliged me to leave the country very precipitately; glad to eſcape with my life, and only a few hundred pounds.

Immediately on my arrival in England, I haſtened to the houſe of General Elwin, But gracious heaven! what a change was there! I tremble at the remembrance. My ever valued friend dead, and my child gone they knew not whither. The General lamented his irreparable loſs. I enquired the reaſon of my daughter's leaving his family in ſo myſterious a manner. He knew not; ſhe diſappeared ſuddenly; and—but he was unwilling to wound the ear of a parent.

I returned to my lodgings in a ſtate little better than that of diſtraction. The general behaved in the moſt friendly manner towards me; he offered me his houſe, but it was a

place of too much diſſipation; beſides, it reminded me too deeply of that angel by whom it was once inhabited. I offered to reſtore the ſum which enabled me to go to India; but he would not hear of it. He aſſiſted my endeavours to diſcover the place of my daughter's retreat; but months paſſed away, without the leaſt ſucceſs; till one evening ſitting in my own apartment, ſomebody tapped at the door, I opened it: a female, pale and trembling, entered: ſhe gazed on me for a moment: then burſting into tears, "Are you," ſaid ſhe, "that parent whoſe heart I have ſo cruelly wrung?" Who can imagine what I felt at finding my long loſt child? Joy was my firſt emotion. But to find her thus, the picture of diſtreſs, that required explanation. I remained however not long in ſuſpence. Ezalinda told me ſuch a tale,—as filled me with horror. That ſmooth diſſembling villain General Elwin, whom I had foſtered in my boſom, and called my beſt friend, had ſhortened the days of his excellent wife, who breathed

not her ſorrows to any but that being,—who, doubtleſs, rewarded her exemplary life by taking her to himſelf; and my poor child was left the unprotected object of his licentious love. Her he perſecuted without mercy; and ſhe fled from him. A young gentleman whom he had adopted as his heir, had long profeſſed himſelf her friend. He adviſed and aſſiſted her in this ſtep, and ſoon avowed himſelf her lover. She made her home with a faithful creature, who had been the favorite attendant of her benefactreſs, and was married to a very reſpectable tradeſman. Her generous lover (as ſhe believed him) ſpent all his leiſure hours with her. "he was formed to charm the heart of woman," ſaid ſhe, ſighing,—and I returned his paſſion with ardour. Having thus paſſed many weeks, he preſſed me to marry him; and I providentially made a confidant of my deſerving protectreſs, who guarded me againſt a marriage in England, as we were neither of us of age. I mentioned this circumſtance to my impatient Arthur.

He

He acknowledged its juftnefs, but murmured at the delay. Bufinefs of the General's now called him to the North of England. This he deemed moft fortunate,—we could take Scotland in our way, if I would confent to accompany him. He pleaded his caufe moft eloquently. Could I be accufed of imprudence? Did I not owe him every thing? At leaft, I had every reafon to believe I did; for Indiana's Bevil was not more delicate, more refined. In fhort, I confented; and my kind protectrefs faw us united in Scotland.

"I Immediately returned with her, and left my hufband to tranfact the bufinefs of his friend. In a few days he followed us on the wings of love. I continued a boarder in the fame family, and thought myfelf the happieft of Women. But this little gleam of fun-fhine was fucceeded by a long, long night of darknefs. I am deferted, cruelly left to ftruggle with poverty and anguifh. Months are now paft fince I have feen him; I have repeatedly wrote to him, but in vain.

vain. I can obtain no anſwer: could I diſcover in what I have offended, methinks, it would be ſome conſolation. But where, where am I to fly for redreſs? My female friend is ſtill ſincere,—ſhe has watched over me with the tenderneſs of a parent, and through her means was I informed of your arrival. Oh! forgive, and ſhield your poor girl a little longer. And thou barbarous, but ſtill dear Arthur, will ſoon be at liberty to roam the paths of libertiniſm, unſhackled by that odious object: a wife:"

Grief and rage took alternate poſſeſſion of my mind during this recital. I curſed the General and all his race; I dropped a tear to the memory of that fair injured excellence his wife. I embraced my poor Ezalinda, and promiſed to avenge her wrong. "I will go to the General," ſaid I, "and force him to do you juſtice." "Oh! do not name that," replied ſhe in agony.—"You do not know him, he will purſue us to deſtruction; beſides, I have ſolemnly vowed the General never, through

my means, ſhall be made acquainted with our marriage."

She was agitated beyond expreſſion; and I acquieſced, in conſideration of her health. I accompanied her to her good Mrs. Maſons; and in a few days we left London, and went to the humble habitation of my ſiſter. She was poor, and ſurrounded with a numerous family; but ſhe received us with the moſt cordial affection. Ezalinda began to recover. I wrote to her huſband a long letter totally diveſted of paſſion; earneſtly conjuring him to attend to the voice of juſtice and humanity. He did not think proper to treat me with the ſilent contempt he had ſhewn to my daughter; but his anſwer breathed nothing but daring inſolence. He treated his marriage as a mere farce, and declared my daughter's indiſpoſition was the cauſe of his inconſtancy; and that as ſhe did not think proper to obſerve her promiſe of ſecrecy, ſhe muſt deſervedly lament the effects of her folly; and as for my petty threats, he ſet them at defiance.

Judge

Judge of my rage, ye who have experienced ſimilar injuries. In ſpite of Ezalinda's entreaties, I haſtened to town, and went to the General's houſe; but here my purpoſe was likewiſe defeated. That unhappy man was no more: he expired in a fit of debauchery.—Tremble ye ſons of luxury, and avoid his fate.

I enquired for his heir; and the ſervants informed me, that he had left town ſome days, though they knew not where he was gone.

Deeply depreſſed I returned to my daughter with a promiſe from Mrs. Maſon, to inform me when the villain came to town. This ſhe faithfully performed, and conjured me to loſe no time. I inſtantly obeyed her ſummons; but was again diſappointed, as he had embarked for France a few hours before I reached town.

This news ſtruck my poor daughter to the heart, ſhe dropped beneath the blow. Fain would ſhe have concealed her ſorrows from me; but that was impoſſible. She was

 now

now my only treaſure, and with anguiſh inexpreſſible I ſaw baleful conſumption coming to ſnatch her from me. Her phyſician adviſed Bath. Thither I conveyed her; and its ſalutary ſprings added to the ſocial converſe of a few well choſen friends, performed wonders. I took a houſe in its environs: it was an humble and a happy retreat. By the labours of my pen, and Ezalinda's induſtry, we added ſomething to our narrow income; and nine years had almoſt obliterated the memory of her perfidious huſband, when one evening in a public walk Ezalinda leaning on my arm we met the wretch—triumphant in vice. My daughter exclaimed it was her huſband, —and fainted.—Regardleſs of him, I ſupported my child; and ere ſhe recovered, he diſappeared. But I diſcovered the place of his abode: I ſaw him, and calmly expoſtulated with him on his cruelty and baſeneſs; but he anſwered me only with the moſt opprobrious language, denying his marriage, and meanly calumniating the character of

his

his own wife. I then assured him that the law should do her justice; but he laughed at my threats and advised me to be passive. He instantly removed to London; exasperated by his conduct and regardless of the intreaties of my daughter, I followed him, and again went to his house resolved to put the law in force against him. But he effectually prevented my designs, by arresting me for upwards of 700l. for sums lent me by the General, and the support of my daughter. I sold out of the stocks, and paid him every farthing. To think of law was now impossible. I had but ten pounds in the world, and with that was about to return to Bath, when another arrest prevented me. It was at the suit of a taylor, who furnished me with cloaths before I went to India. I mentioned this debt to General Elwin after my return, and he assured me it was paid.—Judge then of my surprise at the present demand. Unable to pay it, I was conducted to this dreary abode. As soon as Ezalinda heard of my fate, she fol-

lowed me hither. Illneſs increaſed our diſtreſs: I attended the ſick couch of my unhappy daughter; I was her nurſe, and her phyſician; but while I attended to her, I neglected myſelf. She now begins to recover, and this care-worn frame will ſoon be releaſed from the pains of mortality. But what will become of Ezalinda? Left to ſtruggle with accumulated evils, drawn down by the raſhneſs of her father? Oh! had I liſtened to her mild perſuaſions, this laſt effort of villainy had never overtaken us—We ſtill had been ſecure againſt its attacks in our peaceful retreat at Bath. But who can patiently bear ſuch wrongs?

A fever at this moment rages through my veins, and this is the laſt act of juſtice I can ever do for my daughter. Want and wretchedneſs ſtare me in the face. Should ſhe ſurvive me, this narration written by the hand of a broken hearted father, may through the interpoſition of heaven, induce ſome benevolent reader to whiſper peace to

her

her ſorrows, when I am mingled with my kindred duſt.

The real names of thoſe concerned in my misfortunes I have concealed, from a principle of humanity.

' Oh! merciful diſpoſer of all things, when I am no more, ſhield my Ezalinda from wrong. Render her huſband ſenſible of the injuries he has done her, and raiſe her up aſſiſtance. With thee all things are poſſible. This is the prayer that lingers round my heart, and will attend me in the laſt moment of exiſtence.

CHAPTER XI.

SUCH were the ſorrows of this unfortunate debtor. The coach ſtopped before Adela had half read the account of them. But ſhe had ſeen enough; ſhe ran up ſtairs to Mrs. Lennard, almoſt breath-

leſs with haſte; ſhe entered the room, and laying the account on the table with the purſe ſhe had received from that lady, "Deareſt Madam," ſaid ſhe, "they are the beſt and the moſt injured of beings; but the payment of this muſt not be delayed. The life of the father depends on his being immediately removed. Will you ſend inſtantly and diſcharge it?" But her eager ſolicitude prevented her from obſerving Lord Wentworth and Mr. Budenal, to whom Mrs. Lennard was relating the cauſe of her abſence when ſhe entered. The face of the former of thoſe gentlemen became the colour of crimſon; from what cauſe I will not pretend to aſcertain. But the latter exclaimed, preſſing the hand of Adela, "Suffer me, charming Miſs Northington to be the meſſenger of your beneficence." She gladly and thankfully accepted his offer; and taking up the account, he flew on the wings of love to execute his commiſſion. But he left the purſe on the table: Adela lamented the

omiſſion.

omiſſion. "It proceeded from the excellence of his heart," ſaid Lord Wentworth, "for it is ever open to the voice of diſtreſs; he could think of nothing but the ſufferings of thoſe unhappy people." "What an admirable portrait! has your lordſhip drawn!" ſaid Adela. "Believe me, Madam," replied he, "I am incapable of doing juſtice to the original; and yet I knew his heart well,—know it to be the abode of every moral and ſocial virtue; for long have our ſouls been linked in the bonds of friendſhip." Mrs. Lennard added to this panegyric, by relating ſome proofs ſhe had ſeen of Mr. Budenal's benevolence while at Low-Wood. Adela was ſilent; but her expreſſive countenance teſtified approbation: it commenced with Mr. Budenal, but ended with Lord Wentworth. She related the priſon ſcene, and anxiouſly wiſhed the return of her deputy. He ſtaid very long, but his time was well employed; he not only diſcharged the debt, but removed the objects of his charity to a comfortable lodg-

ing in the houſe of a widow gentlewoman, to whom he was well known, and of whoſe attention to them he aſſured Adela there was no doubt. She thanked him repeatedly and acknowledged herſelf a debtor to his generoſity; but mentioning the purſe, "Do not, Madam," ſaid he, "deny me ſo inconſiderable a ſhare in their relief of thoſe worthy ſufferers: I have only been your emiſſary. But this" (laying the money on her lap) may relieve ſome future diſtreſs." "It is an argument," replied Adela, "I muſt leave the donor to ſupport," giving the purſe to Mrs. Lennard; "for I have no claim to be arbitrator." "I would not be thought ſelfiſh," ſaid Mrs. Lennard, "particularly in a caſe like this, wherein Mr. Budenal's ruling paſſion is ſo much concerned." The ſpeech was flattering; and he, to whom it was addreſſed felt all its force: he bowed; and his complexion (generally invariable) now imitated the bluſhing Wentworth, whoſe weakneſs in that reſpect he ſo often ridiculed. The

eulogium

eulogium which friendſhip had beſtowed on him, made a deep impreſſion on the mind of Adela, (added to the ſtriking proof he had juſt given of poſſeſſing a heart glowing with philanthropy) juſtly entitled him to her warmeſt eſteem; and when, with Lord Wentworth, he bade them adieu.—Mrs. Lennard promiſed them a peruſal of the father's narrative at their next viſit.

CHAPTER XII.

ADELA could not diveſt herſelf of anxiety about the unfortunate Nevilles. She was ſatisfied that their ſorrows were alleviated; and that they were removed to a peaceful habitation. Yet an uneaſineſs hung about her heart: ſhe wiſhed again to ſee them. Perhaps they ſtill wanted the aſſiſtance of ſome friendly hand; per-

haps the father was no more, and ſhe might be enabled in ſome degree to ſooth the anguiſh of the unhappy Ezalinda. She hinted her fears to Mrs. Lennard, who conſented to viſit them after dinner; and taking up the manuſcript, read it aloud to Adela and Miſs Wells. But towards the concluſion ſhe was interrupted by the entrance of Sir William and Lady Urſell, with whom Mrs. Lennard had been on the moſt intimate footing, ever ſince her reconciliation with her father: as Sir William had at that time ſhewn himſelf a warm and diſintereſted friend. Their family conſiſted only of two daughters, the eldeſt was, in perſon what is generally termed pretty, but in mind a mere blank. The youngeſt, a fine ſenſible girl about fifteen, of whom Mrs. Lennard was extremely fond; but ſhe was now confined by indiſpoſition, which prevented her much wiſhed for viſit to Hanover-ſquare: for ſhe had heard of Adela, and with all the impatience ſo natural to young and lively minds, ardently deſired to

ſee her; and intreated her Mamma to uſe all her rhetoric to perſuade Mrs. Lennard and her young friend to return with them.

Lady Urſell now addreſſed herſelf to Adela, expreſſing her pleaſure at ſeeing her in town, and her wiſh of being honored with her friendſhip, and frequent preſence in Harley-ſtreet. To which Adela replied in a manner that increaſed the good opinion her ladyſhip had formed of her, from a letter of Mrs. Lennard's which ſhe had that morning received; as well as from the deſcription of Lord Wentworth and Mr. Budenal.

Sir Williams's attention had been totally engroſſed by Adela from the moment of his entrance: approbation was ſtrongly imprinted on his features; and addreſſing himſelf to Mrs. Lennard, "you never," ſaid he, knew your excellent mother; but in Miſs Northington you ſee the moſt exact copy of her perſon. Juſt ſuch was Emily Northington, when I firſt beheld her at Faern-hall, ſoon after my return from Italy.

Oh! Emma, ſhe was a bright angel; and heaven could not lend her long: her image took poſſeſſion of my ſoul, and even now I cannot think of her without emotion! But your happy father had engaged her heart and hand, and my flame was hopeleſs." "I therefore," continued he, "after a conteſt rather ſevere, transferred the ardent paſſion to an object whoſe merit I believe has few ſuperiors. He uttered theſe words in a low voice; and lady Urſell was too deeply engaged with Adela to attend to any thing elſe. "And ſo Sir William," replied Mrs. Lennard, "you was really in love with my mother. This is a piece of intelligence quite novel to me, and I am half inclined to be wicked enough to tell tales of you."

"If you mean to Lady Urſell," returned Sir William, "you will be diſappointed, for ſhe knew the whole ſtory before ſhe was my wife." How mortifying that is!" ſaid Mrs. Lennard, "to be deprived of the ſatisfaction of making a little miſchief; it would

would be charming revenge for your never telling me I reſembled this dear mother." "Indeed," replied Sir William, "I muſt depart from truth to tell you ſo; but let this make my peace. You are a thouſand times more beautiful." But not half ſo bewitching, you would add," "What a provoking creature you are, Sir William with your ſincerity? Don't you know it is quite old faſhioned to be ſincere? I ſhall not forgive you this age, for putting me ſo out of humour with myſelf." "But this fair lady," replied he, addreſſing Adela, "will, I truſt, uſe her intereſt to procure me a pardon, ſince ſhe is the cauſe of my incurring your diſpleaſure. "Tell me," continued he, preſſing her hand, "Will you not intercede with this hard-hearted friend of yours?" "I am unacquainted with the quarrel," replied Adela; "but do not imagine any thing I can ſay to Mrs. Lennard will be regarded, if you have failed."

"It is your exceſſive humility that makes you think ſo," returned Sir William; "for ſurely

furely there does not exift a being who could reject fuch a petitioner." He then proceeded with much humour to inform her in what he had offended; but was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Melville, who was juft returned from the feat of Sir Edmund Benfield, where he had been from the time of his calling at Low-Wood, and was now accompanied by a lady, refpecting whom Adela's curiofity had been ftrongly excited by the defcription of Mrs. Lennard; to whofe family, and that of Sir William Urfell's, fhe had at the earneft entreaty of Mr. Melville been lately introduced; and her acquiefcence in this point was to him no inconfiderable compliment; for Mrs. Delamaine's friends confifted of a chofen and felect fet, among whom were few females: for the number of thofe were very confined, from whofe fociety fhe could derive the fmalleft fatisfaction. Tell me ye who frequent fafhionable circles, how are the generality of female minds cultivated? Delineate the graces of their conver-

verfation,

verſation, the delicacy of their manners, the juſtneſs of their ſentiments, unbiaſſed by faſhion or prejudice. Immortalize their fame, and ſucceeding ages will crown you with laurel.

What then muſt Mrs. Delamaine be, who rather avoided than ſought ſuch deſirable companions? A ſtrange being! you will ſay, true; ſo very ſtrange! That in vain have I endeavoured to deſcribe her; but truſt, in the courſe of this narrative, ſhe will ſpeak ſufficiently for herſelf. From the moment of her entrance, Adela was the principal object of her attention: ſhe felt an irreſiſtible, and an unaccountable attachment; there was a ſomething in her look and manner, that convinced her that ſhe too was a ſtrange being. Her intimacy in Mrs. Lennard's family (ſhort as it was) had given her a thorough knowledge of the principal traits in the character both of that lady and her beloved Amelia; and ſhe could not help being warmly intereſted for the poor dependant orphan, juſt emerged from peace-

peaceful obſcurity. She liſtened to the encomiums of Mrs. Lennard; but was no ſtranger to the charms of novelty, and the power of caprice introduced among us by folly and diſſipation. Nor was Adela leſs attracted by the originality of Mrs. Delamaine: her ſoul of fire was perhaps too ſuſceptible of firſt impreſſions; it was a foible for which ſhe had been often blamed, and which ſhe frequently lamented: becauſe young as ſhe was, ſhe had ſuffered from its effects: yet it governed her with deſpotic ſway: it was inherent in her nature, and all her efforts to eradicate it proved ineffectual. She again liſtened to its dictates, and Mrs. Delamaine was admitted as one of her prime favorites. The event will beſt decide the propriety of her choice. That lady was now reminded by Mr. Melville, that it was time to depart; and Sir William and lady Urſell aroſe to accompany her; when the latter recollecting the petition of Fanny, preſented it to Mrs. Lennard; and backed by the intereſt of Sir William and herſelf,

it could hardly fail of ſucceſs. Miſs Wells was invited; but Sir William had offended by his admiration of Adela, and feeling herſelf of little importance, ſhe (as was often the caſe) affected indiſpoſition, as a means of indulging the whim of the moment. Mrs. Lennard reluctantly complied with the entreaty of the Urſells, merely from a wiſh of ſeeing her favourite Fanny. But ſhe went with a promiſe to Miſs Wells of an early return; and Mr. Melville and Mrs. Delamaine, engaged to ſpend the afternoon at Sir Williams's, and Adela was delighted at the proſpect of improving her acquaintance.

CHAPTER XIII.

NO ſooner was Adela ſeated in the carriage of Sir William Urſell, than the Nevilles recurring to her imagination, marked

marked her expreſſive features with melancholy, and caſt a gloom over every enlivening ſenſation. "Much rather," thought ſhe, "would I viſit them, and ſtrive to brighten up the dwelling of affliction, than be a ſharer in every thing the world calls pleaſure." Her vivacity fled, and Sir William Urſell did not fail to obſerve the ſudden change. In a few minutes they ſtopped in Harley-ſtreet; and when they alighted from the carriage, Adela whiſpered a requeſt to Mrs. Lennard, begging ſhe would ſend a ſervant to make ſome enquiry about Mr. Neville. This was inſtantly complied with, and the anſwer was highly ſatisfactory to both: it was from the miſtreſs of the houſe, ſaying, "that Mr. Neville's diſorder had taken a favourable turn, and that the phyſician who had been ordered to attend him, believed him out of danger. This intelligence reſtored Adela's ſpirits, animated her with more vivacity then ſhe in general poſſeſſed, charmed every eye, and intereſted every heart in her favor.

Fanny Urſell declared ſhe far exceeded all deſcription, and was indefatigable in evincing her approbation, and claiming her friendſhip, by an attention which with a diſpoſition like Adela's could not fail of enſuring ſucceſs. Fanny Urſell was poſſeſſed of ſtrong maſculine ſenſe; it was at leaſt equal to, but very different from Adela's. She had likewiſe a large ſtore of that quality, which a late eminent writer ſo warmly recommends to his ſon. The former of thoſe qualities, natuıe pointed out to Adela; the latter, ſhe wanted experience to diſcover; and impreſſed with the higheſt ſenſe of her merit, not only from her own obſervations, but from the eulogiums of Mrs. Lennard; the advantage of three years on the ſide of Adela was thought no barrier to that attachment ſo ardently wiſhed for by her young friend.

Their afternoon gueſts added conſiderably to their happineſs. Mrs. Delamaine and Adela ſeemed mutually deſirous of improving the preſent moment; and the lively

Fanny, whom even illneſs could not deprive of her extreme vivacity, complained greatly that Mrs. Delamaine always monopolized the moſt deſirable part of the company. "A proof," ſaid Mr. Budenal, "of her judgment: for there are very few capable of diſtinguiſhing real merit." But by this ſpeech he drew on himſelf an inundation of raillery from his fair antagoniſt, who alledged his aſſertion was the moſt flattering compliment to himſelf, as he was one of Mrs. Delamaine's ſelected few. But he made a very judicious defence; and the diſpute afforded conſiderable amuſement to the reſt of the company; as Fanny did not fail to indulge herſelf in all the playfulneſs of wit; but ſhe having unfortunately alledged that his late ill health, originated from diſappointed love, he did not fail to avail himſelf of her indiſpoſition, and retorted upon her with intereſt. She laughed it off; but it was that ſort of laugh, which ſhewed he had ſtruck too near the truth. The entrance of Lord Wentworth ended the conteſt.

Lady Urſell mentioned their intention of going into the country in conſideration of Fanny's health. "For," ſays ſhe to Mrs. Lennard, "notwithſtanding her preſent vivacity, that poor child is conſumed by a conſtant fever on her ſpirits; and when alone, ſhe is the very emblem of wretchedneſs." "I fear," continued ſhe, "ſome ſecret uneaſineſs is the cauſe; but all my efforts to diſcover it have hitherto proved ineffectual. You, my dear Mrs. Lennard are, I know, the perſon on earth ſhe moſt confides in; could you viſit us at Richmond? it would not only contribute to make us all happy, but might render my poor girl the moſt eſſential ſervice; for miſery properly imparted, is half cured." Lady Urſell made this requeſt with all the ſolicitude of maternal fondneſs; and Mrs. Lennard promiſed to comply as ſoon as poſſible. "We go to-morrow," added her ladyſhip; "remember, I ſhall be all anxiety until we ſee you. Mrs. Delamaine I have already invited; and I give you a commiſ-

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ſion to make the party as agreeable as poſſible."

Mrs. Lennard and Adela now bade them adieu, and Lord Wentworth accompanied them. He enquired if they had ſeen the Nevilles ſince their removal; and Mrs. Lennard related the account which the ſervant brought of them. "Budenal went thither juſt before I called in Harley-ſtreet,' ſaid his lordſhip, " and I have not ſeen him ſince."

On their arrival in Hanover-ſquare they found Mr. Budenal with Miſs Wells. " I have been anxiouſly wiſhing for you theſe two hours," exclaimed he, as they entered the drawing room, " and am half dead with laſſitude from your abſence." The unintentional rudeneſs of this ſpeech, ſtruck him the inſtant it was uttered, and he faltered out an ineffectual excuſe to Miſs Wells.

Adela enquired for the Nevilles. Mr. Budenal informed her, that he came from them to Hanover-ſquare, and confirmed the meſſage of the landlady: that Mr. Neville

ville was much better, and that there was not the ſmalleſt doubt of his recovery; adding in a low voice, "I am impatient to ſee the narrative you mentioned, when I was laſt here, and Wentworth is no leſs ſo." "You have a powerful plea to be gratified in that reſpect," replied Adela; and inſtantly quitted the room to fetch it.

I am thinking of a party to Ranelagh to-morrow," ſaid Mrs. Lennard, "if you are well enough to accompany us Amelia; for Miſs Northington has never yet been in public." Miſs Wells cooly replied, "ſhe would by no means prevent pleaſure;" and Lord Wentworth and Mr. Budenal begged permiſſion to attend them.

Adela entered with Mr. Neville's narrative, and gave it to Mr. Budenal. He opened it, glanced his eye ſlightly over it, and enquired if he might keep it till the following day? this was readily granted; and Lord Wentworth ſoon after took his leave. Mr. Budenal ſeemed buried in a reverie; but was ſoon rouſed by the ſpright-

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ly ſallies of Mrs. Lennard; who, to amuſe the paſſing moment, rallied Adela on having loſt her heart with Mr. Budenal; and Adèla unuſed to ſuch a broad hint, bluſhed as if conſcious of its reality; for a delicate and unexperienced mind is ever moſt open to alarm. Mr. Budenal from Adela's confuſion believed Mrs. Lennard's aſſertion a matter of fact; which (abſurd as it in reality was) is accounted for when we conſider that diſcernment was blinded by love. He bade them adieu with his head and heart full of Neville and Adela. Their mutual diſtreſs in ſome meaſure baniſhed thoſe horrors that occaſioned by envy, and jealouſy, tormented the mind of Miſs Wells, and prevented her viſit to Harley-ſtreet.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PEACEFUL mind ſecured to Adela found repoſe; and waking early the next morning, ſhe tripped with ſpirits light as air to the apartment of her patroneſs, whom ſhe found already ſeated at the toilette.

The ærial beings, who, in days of yore attended on the ill fated Belinda, now hovered around the beautiful Emma; imparted beauty to her ſparkling eyes, ſweetneſs to her ſmile, and inſpired the otherwiſe uſeleſs Le Roche with the power of heigthening every native charm by all the elegance of dreſs. Nor were the tories of faſhion inſenſible to its effect. Thus adorned, ſhe was by them deemed irreſiſtible; but ſo *outré* was the taſte of Adela, that ſhe ſeated herſelf by the ſide of her friend, and young as ſhe was, ſilently lamented, when like her

fair predeceſſor ſhe bowed to worſhip the coſmetic powers. Mrs. Lennard had reſource to aids which are not juſtifiable even in deformity. What then ſhall be ſaid of thoſe on whom Heaven has laviſhed ſome of its choiceſt gifts? Let them reflect but for a moment on the monſtrous folly of ſuch a conduct; look forward to the decline of life, when all their arts will but render the devaſtations of time more conſpicuous. Convinced of their inefficacy to ſecure the admiration or eſteem of the valuable part of mankind, may they deſpiſe the notice of fools, bluſh even through artificial white and red, and raſing the altars of Caſmelia to the ground, and rely in future on more permanent allurements. This leſſon Adela reſolved ſhould guide her through life. Intent on the decorations of Mrs. Lennard, "why," thought ſhe, "be thus aſſiduous in ornamenting a periſhable form? I will endeavour to profit by the example, and aſpire to the poſſeſſion of thoſe graces which neither age, ſorrow, poverty, nor

illneſs

illneſs, can ever deſtroy; but which, on the contrary, illumine the darkeſt cavern, and diffuſe a radiance through the thickeſt gloom of ſuffering mortality."

While the mind of Adela was thus employed, ſhe held in her hand the Tales of the Genii; but Miſs Wells entering the room, ſhe threw by her book and reflection together, and enquired if that lady would not accompany them in their viſit? which being readily complied with, breakfaſt detained them but a ſhort time; and they ſat off unattended on their errand of charity.

On entering the ſtreet, Mrs. Lennard was about to apply to her pocket book for the addreſs which Mr. Budenal had given her; but it was unneceſſary, being ſtrongly impreſſed on the benevolent mind of her young friend.

The houſe was rather genteel than otherwiſe. A female ſervant opened the door: Mrs. Lennard enquired for her miſtreſs, and they were ſhewn into a parlour, where ſhe ſat at work, and by her ſide was a young

woman lounging in an elbow chair with a book in her hand: her perſon was ſhowy, and her attire ſtill more ſo; ſhe laid the book on the table as the ladies entered, but ſtill kept her ſeat. The elder woman aroſe, and received them with great civility. Mrs. Lennard enquired for Miſs Neville. "They have left my lodgings, Madam," ſhe replied, looking ſurpriſed. "Left you," exclaimed Mrs. Lennard, "that is very amazing. Pray, can you inform us where they are gone?" "No, Ma'am; but a porter brought them a letter laſt evening, and they went away in a hackney-coach, about two hours ago. The young lady told me, their benefactreſs had ſent for them." "But I thought," rejoined Mrs. Lennard, "Mr. Neville was too ill to be removed." "Why, the poor gentleman was certainly very poorly, Ma'am, but had no return of his fever after he came here; however, I really wondered he ſhould think of going in that weak ſtate, for he was obliged to be carried into the coach." "And pray who carried him?"

him?" enquired Mrs. Lennard. "Two men, Madam, that came here this morning for the purpofe."

"Is not this very extraordinary?" faid Mrs. Lennard, addreffing herfelf to Adela, "Can you unravel this myftery?" "Indeed, I cannot," replied Adela, ftruck to the foul by an account fo inexplicable: "But it may poffibly be in the power of this lady to obtain fome further intelligence of them." "I fhall certainly do all in my power, Ma'am," replied the woman, pleafed at the diftinction, "if you will favour me with your addrefs." This requeft was complied with, and they were going, when Mr. Budenal knocked at the door. He made the fame enquiry Mrs. Lennard had before done, and was likewife fhewn into the parlour.

"Ever foremoft in the caufe of virtue, ladies," faid he, as he entered the room, "I blufh at my own negligence: but tell me, how is Mr. Neville?" "Of that we are no lefs ignorant than yourfelf," replied

Mrs. Lennard. "How is that Madam?" enquired he with ſurpriſe: "Cannot this good lady inform you? pointing to the miſtreſs of the houſe. This produced an explanation; but the aſtoniſhment of Mr. Budenal was paſt deſcription.

"There muſt" ſaid he, "be ſome ſtrange miſtake in all this: perhaps the worthy people are deceived by ſome deſigning villains! perhaps, by the very wretch who has undone them. This I think the moſt probable caſe: for I cannot be induced to ſuſpect them; however, I will leave no means untried to trace the truth, and puniſh the aggreſſor." "And heaven will aſſuredly reward the laudable intention," ſaid Adela, who warmly eſpouſed his opinion, "for I am well aſſured they are truly deſerving." Mrs. Lennard liſtened to the opinions of others without giving her own; and Miſs Wells threw out ſome ſarcaſtic hints on credulity and fancied *protegeés*; and was reſtrained from ſaying more only by the fear of offending her beloved Budenal, for

whom

whom every interview increafed the efteem of Adela; yet in fpite of warm approbation, when fhe viewed him in the light of a lover! a hufband! the being whom, next to heaven, fhe muft love and refpect; her partner and protector through life; her heart revolted! Fain would fhe have flattered herfelf that his attention was no more than common-place gallantry, heightened by novelty. "For how," faid fhe, too nice, "Adela wilt thou efcape the charge of folly and romance! for preferring the bread of charity, to the envied hand of a man univerfally efteemed accomplifhed, poffeffed of an affluent fortune? But it is my firm refolve never to be the facrifice of opinion. The words of my dying mother, I can never forget. "Beware," faid fhe, "my Adela, how you place implicit belief in eftablifhed maxims. It is a rule the moft uncertain. A rock on which the happinefs of millions perifh. Look round the world, you will not fee two people, whofe *fummum bonum* of human felicity is the fame. How then

then can any path be marked for ſuch a motley tribe. See the aſpiring ſon of ambition with him; it is aſſuredly laudable to climb the heights of honor, if he is careful to avoid the lures of vice. It is fulfilling the purpoſe of that wiſe being, who doubtleſs created him for the public good. On the contrary, behold another placing his wiſhes on domeſtic enjoyments. Diſintereſted friendſhip, a pure and delicate love, (not what is too often dignified with that appellation) inſpire him with a ſort of extacy. Let reaſon point out the path he ought to purſue. Ye ſons of Mammon, go on: ſtrive to obtain that glittering ore, for which ye languiſh: it is the impulſe of your groveling natures, and you are blameleſs, while you keep free from that exceſs which leads to actual crimes.

" Study then, my child, the real bent of your mind: it is the light of heaven within us. But alas! how few will ſubmit to its guidance. We pervert its wiſe deſigns, and often lay to the charge of Providence the

the effects of our own folly. Your dispo-sition, I scruple not to tell you, is peculiarly happy: the greatest fault I observe, is, too large a portion of gentleness; it is an amia-ble quality; but the excess of every thing is bad. It will I fear be productive of infinite misery to you. Guard yourself therefore against its effects. Study that must useful of all sciences, the knowledge of your own heart; and beware of that dangerous instability, which renders it next to impossible to ascertain the character of the generality of the human race."

Thus Adela revolved in her mind the last maternal lesson she ever received; while her friends were engaged in conversation with the mistress of the house; but the name of Lord Wentworth, uttered in a loud key recalled her attention, and awaken-ed her curiosity. "Oh!" said the woman with a very sagacious look, "I know his lordship well. "Pray Sir," addressing her-self to Mr. Budenal, "was it he who re-commended those people to your charity?"

replied in the negative, adding, " this lady," meaning Adela, " is their real benefactreſs; I only act for her. But why this enquiry reſpecting Lord Wentworth? his recommendation would certainly have had great weight with me; for he is the deareſt friend of my ſoul."

The woman ſeemed embarraſſed and anſwered with heſitation: " I had no particular reaſon for what I ſaid, Sir; his lordſhip is certainly, by all accounts one of the worthieſt of men, my mother nurſed him; but I have never ſeen him ſince he was a child, and I dare ſay he has quite forgot me." " I will mention you to him, if you think proper," replied Mr. Budenal. " You are very good, Sir; but I durſt not accept your offer. The cenſures of the world are not to be defied by people like us: I am exceedingly particular in that reſpect; and if I was to ſuffer gentlemen to viſit us, the neighbours would be very apt to talk, for it is a very malicious world; however, I defy any body to ſay I or mine, (looking

aſkaunt

askaunt at her daughter who simpered with all the affectation of false modesty) ever neglected propriety."

This harangue produced a gracious nod from Mr. Budenal; a smile, which might be variously construed from Mrs. Lennard, and a yawn from Miss Wells, while Adela's mind pronounced her a very prudent, good kind of a woman. Time now obliged them to return. Mrs. Lennard left her address, and the judicious Mrs. Lawson repeated her friendly intentions of being indefatigable in her efforts to obtain some intelligence of the Nevilles.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. BUDENAL accompanied them home. In the course of their conversation, Adela discovered that he had bestowed on the Nevilles a very considera-

ble ſum: this ſerved to convice her that their diſappearing was not the effect of choice; for why ſhould they flee from the hand of liberality?

Mr. Budenal blamed the extreme tenderneſs of Mr. Neville, in concealing the real names of his enemies: he juſtly termed it ill timed, and lamented the misfortunes it would probably occaſion to that much-injured man, and his unhappy daughter.

Dinner awaited them in Hanover-ſquare. They found cards from Lord Wentworth, Mr. Budenal, and Mrs. Delamaine; the two latter with Mrs. Edgeley and Miſs Grillard, was likewiſe invited to be of their Ranelagh party. Mr. Budenal took a haſty leave; and as ſoon as dinner was removed, the ladies retired to their dreſſing-rooms. But oh! unlooked for chance! Adela had not a gown fit to appear in! This was a circumſtance till now unthought of. What could be done in ſuch a dilemma? John was diſpatched to the mantua-maker, who returned with him; but not one of Miſs

North-

Northington's gowns were touched. Every invention was then tried to remove this unfortunate obſtacle: ſhe put on ſome dreſſes of Mrs. Lennard and Miſs Wells's; but ſo different was ſhe formed from either, that they hung about her like ſacks; and they were all in perfect deſpair, when Mrs. Bennet luckily thought of a ſcheme to obviate their diſtreſs. She had a very elegant fancy dreſs by her, that was made for a young lady who died before it was finiſhed, and ſhe believed, was much the ſize of Adela. This was ſent for: Mrs. Lennard approved of it; and the buſineſs of the toilette went forward with alacrity; but ere it was complete, Lord Wentworth was announced, and Mrs. Lennard ordered him to be ſhewn up ſtairs.

Adela was not preſent at his lordſhip's entrance; but when ſhe had finiſhed dreſſing, the addition of a few knots of ribband, ſhe came to conſult Mrs. Lennard about her choice of them; and not being appriſed of Lord Wentworth's being there, her cheek

fluſhed

flushed as she entered the dressing-room. A more enchanting figure cannot well be imagined: her dress was light, elegant, and perfectly adapted to the warmth of the season, and the delicacy of her form. Her dark auburn tresses were dressed to great advantage; and unsullied by powder; and her fine eyes revealed the spotless mind that dwelt within. Lord Wentworth gazed attentively. He had hitherto taken very little notice of her; but his heart now acknowledged the force of youth and innocence, adorned by such uncommon attractions; and taking up one of the ribbands which she carelessly held in her hand, "I hope," said he, "Miss Northington is too compassionate to add any other allurements; when nature has already been perhaps too lavish, for the peace of many."

"I am not ambitious of the ornament of art," replied Adela, blushing still deeper, as it was the first gallant speech his lordship had ever addressed to her, "but you must own the necessity of acquiescing in some degree

degree with the cuſtoms of the world." "True, Madam;" returned he, twiſting one of the ribbands round his arm, "and with a mind like yours, there is no danger of exceſs." She bowed a return to this ſpeech; and having taken Mrs. Lennard's opinion of her dreſs: (which to herſelf ſeemed of little importance) ſhe left them, to give ſome aſſiſtance to Miſs Wells.

In the courſe of Lord Wentworth's converſation with Mrs. Lennard, he gained ſome information reſpecting Adela, which augmented the high opinion he had previouſly formed of her; but he forbore any encomiums, well knowing the diſpoſition of that lady; for he was high in her favor, and from his attention, ſhe believed her charms had made a ſerious impreſſion on his heart; with which (wedded as her affections in reality were to her long loſt Henry) ſhe was by no means diſpleaſed: for ſhe eſteem-no ſacrifice too great to her vanity. From delicacy therefore, (juſtly conſidering the dependant ſituation of Adela) Lord Wentworth

worth thought it beſt to conceal his admiration of her; for it was no more then a tranſient approbation, occaſioned by that warm benevolence of heart to which he had been witneſs, heightened by thoſe nameleſs enchantment of perſon and manners which are felt, though not to be deſcribed. But however removed from love were his ſenſations in favor of Adela, his thorough knowledge of Mrs. Lennard's reigning foible taught him wiſdom; and whiſpered; "woe to thoſe who undeceive a ſelf-adorer."

When the hair-dreſſer had performed his office, and Mrs. Le Roche diſplayed her unrivalled ſkill in ornamenting the head of her fair miſtreſs, Lord Wentworth retired; and entering the ſaloon, a harpſichord which he once heard Adela touch, ſtood temptingly open. He opened a muſic-book which lay on it, and played,

"Sweet enſlaver can'ſt thou tell, &c."

It was merely to amuſe the paſſing moment; but his friend Budenal entered, while

while the laſt notes echoed through the room; and with an air of ſuſpicion, "you deal not openly with me Wentworth," ſaid he, "that boaſted heart of adamant is I fear ſubdued: yes, I fear it, becauſe within theſe few days I obſerve an alteration in you. Tell me, has not the angelic Miſs Northington really *enſlaved* you? Yet,—hold,—if it is ſo, I cannot bear to hear it. Friendſhip is inſtantly at an end between us: for there I will not bear a rival. Wentworth, beware! I charge you, guard well your heart: I ſee the charming girl views you with approbation, while ſomething like averſion ſeems to glance at me. Oh! my friend!" continued he, ſoftening his manner, "avoid her, I entreat you for my ſake and your own: for, be aſſured, a diſappointment there will undo me, I cannot, I cannot live without her!"

The paſſions which Uriel diſcovered in the Grand Diſſembler, could not well be ſtronger than thoſe by which the unhappy Budenal was at that time agitated. I do not

not ſay they were ſimilar; but I appeal to the heart of experience, love, envy, jealouſy, and ſuſpence, do they not act as furies in the human heart? Lord Wentworth was amazed at the words of his friend; and ſtill more ſo, at the manner in which they were uttered, which bordered on madneſs. "To be thus attached to a perfect ſtranger is an inconſiſtency," ſaid he, "of which I can ſcarcely ſuppoſe you capable."

"Then I again tell you," replied Budenal, with anger, "that I adore the lovely Adela; and from the firſt inſtant I beheld her at Low-Wood, reſolved, if poſſible, to make her mine. I tremble at every male being that approaches her. Oh! Wentworth! ſhould I loſe her, there will not exiſt ſuch a wretch as Budenal."

Seeing him incapable of liſtening to reaſon, Lord Wentworth, as ridicule often ſucceeds beyond the power of argument, had reſource to raillery. But the impatient Budenal could not well bear it; and the entrance of Mrs. Lennard with her nymphs, proved

proved a happy interruption. Adela was not in good ſpirits: the adventure of the morning left an impreſſion on her mind, which in vain ſhe endeavoured to ſurmount. Mr. Melville in a few moments joined them eſcorting two divinities, that in the courſe of his peregrinations chance had thrown in his way: theſe were, Mrs. Edgeley and Miſs Grillard. The clamour of their tongues is paſt deſcription: they came full fraught with intelligence, gleaned from every family within the circle of their acquaintance. Out flew ſcandal, envy, folly, and miſrepreſentation. Adela turned from them diſguſted; the faſcinated Budenal planted himſelf by her ſide, and Lord Wentworth forbore to offend by paying her any attention. Mrs. Lennard enquired for Mrs. Delamaine. "She is not fond of public places," replied Mr. Melville, "and ſeldom appears at them." Mrs. Lennard felt the diſappointment. Melville ſeated himſelf in the vacant ſeat of Adela; he was in charming ſpirits, and her natural complacency

cency recalled to Budenal's remembrance an obſervation which Mrs. Lennard once made. Inflamed by jealouſy he ſtarted from his ſeat; and Mr. Melville was leading Adela to the carriage, when ruſhing between them, he ſeized her hand, and left the aſtoniſhed Melville an attendant on thoſe he came with.

To delineate the abſurdity that reigned through the party, is ſurely needleſs: the reader's imagination will eaſily conceive it. View Miſs Wells burning with reſentment towards the innocent Adela; Budenal agitated by a temporary madneſs; and Mrs. Lennard piqued at the attention paid her young friend, an attention which her unaſſuming manners claimed from every man, not void of common diſcernment, but to which Mrs. Lennard thought herſelf much better entitled, could ſcarcely keep her ill-humour within the bounds of *decorum*. Melville pleaſed at his power of teazing Budenal, whom he never liked; and Mrs. Edgeley and Miſs Grillard rendering themſelves

truly contemptible; while Wentworth felt compaſſion for them all. But Adela claimed the largeſt ſhare: ſhe unſuſpicious of the painful emotions ſhe excited, beheld with admiration and wonder the variegated novelties of this mart of gaiety.

Unable to ſupport the cool civility of Adela, Mr. Budenal returned in Mrs. Edgeley's carriage, and Mr. Melville ſupplied his place in that of Mrs. Lennard's.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE next morning Miſs Wells and Adela breakfaſted *tete-a-tete*. Indiſpoſition and a ſleepleſs night deprived them of Mrs. Lennard's company Miſs Wells concealed her chagrin under an apparent concern for her benefactreſs; and ſilence reigned, when Mrs. Lawſon was announced.

"This

" This is a *protegée* of yours, Miſs Northington," ſaid Miſs Wells in an ironical tone; " I will leave you to entertain her." So ſaying, ſhe tripped up ſtairs, and Mrs. Lawſon was ſhewn into the parlour.

She entered with a countenance truly rueful, " You are very good, Madam, to be thus mindful of your promiſe. Have you heard any thing of our friends?" ſaid Adela. " Friends !' repeated Mrs. Lawſon, Oh! Miſs, they have been dreadful enemies to me; indeed, I was very much to blame to take people into my houſe that I knew nothing about; but this is the way charity is generally rewarded. I am robbed, Miſs," continued ſhe, weeping; " a *cabinet* that I valued next my life is taken away, it ſtood by way of ornament on the drawers in the room where Mr. Neville ſlept; and I never thought of removing it; for who would ſuſpect ſuch people as them of being thieves?"

Adela expreſſed her concern, and enquired if her loſs was great. " Oh! Miſs," ſaid

ſaid ſhe, "it is irreparable: it contained many valuable things, beſides all my papers, which were to me much more than all the reſt; and I never miſſed it till this morning." This accounted for their diſappearing. Adela felt for Mrs. Lawſon, and accuſed herſelf as the cauſe of her ſufferings. Deſiring her to be ſeated, ſhe left her to acquaint Mrs. Lennard with this unpleaſing intelligence; but ſhe met Miſs Wells on the ſtairs, and related the cauſe of Mrs. Lawſon's errand. "Such are the common effects of credulity!" ſaid Miſs Wells, with a ſort of triumph: "for my part, I was never very ſanguine about thoſe people." Adela was not inſenſible to the undeſerved ſarcaſm, but made no reply. Mrs. Lennard was reclining on the ſopha, when Adela entered her room, and Le Roche was rubbing her temples with hartſhorn. Adela expreſſed her concern at ſeeing her thus ill, and repeated the ſtory of Mrs. Lawſon. "I am ſorry for the poor woman," ſaid Mrs. Lennard, eaſily, "but I

cannot pretend to anſwer for every body's follies." Ignorant of the true meaning of this ſpeech, Adela expatiated on Mrs. Lawſon's loſs, but without any effect; Mrs. Lennard's heart was ſteeled againſt all ſhe could ſay. Her anſwers were peeviſh, and Adela returned diſappointed to the parlour. She knew Mrs. Lawſon's circumſtances muſt be very confined, and wiſhed to make ſome reparation for the loſs of her cabinet; when recollecting the purſe, which was deſigned for the relief of the Neville's, ſhe offered it with the air of a perſon who receives a favor, as an atonement for the miſchief ſhe had occaſioned. To her great ſurprize, Mrs. Lawſon modeſtly refuſed it, ſaying, "ſhe durſt not rob the poor of their juſt right; for her viſit was only meant as a performance of her promiſe, as it ſurely explained the characters of her lodgers," whom ſhe ſtill profeſſed to pity. With this declaration, artfully blending an eulogium on the excellence of Adela's mind; ſhe departed

departed, leaving our heroine charmed with her difinterestednefs.

A while Adela indulged herfelf in reflecting on the frequent abufe of well meant actions; and refolved in future to be more wife. But alas! worldly wifdom was not among the number of Adela's good qualities. Her mind was a foil in which that ufeful plant could never bloom; that extreme gentlenefs of which her mother warned her, effectually prevented its growth; and now induced her to join with Mrs. Lawfon in pitying, rather than condemning the Nevilles. Still fhe believed them wronged. Could Mrs. Lawfon's cabinet be a fufficient inducement to leave fuch powerful protectors? impoffible. Time would unravel the myftery: her heart ftill efpoufed their caufe.

Adela was about to leave the room, when the entrance of Mrs. Lennard (the very image of beautiful languor) leaning on the arm of Mifs Wells, prevented her. Again fhe refumed the fubject of Mrs. Lawfon;

 but

but there was a cold unkindneſs in the anſwers ſhe received, which her gentle ſpirit could ill bear. "ſurely," thought ſhe, (ſcarcely able to hide the ſtarting tear), "I muſt have committed ſome unintentional fault; and perhaps, what has proceeded from ignorance is miſconſtrued into deſign.

Miſtaken Adela! thy only offence was being too lovely: had you been leſs faultleſs, you might by your own ſex have been more beloved. But what proud beauty can bear to ſee her rights incroached on by a poor dependant; one too, who being inferior in the charms of perſon, ſhe had rather hoped would prove a foil; not knowing that is the ſoul that charms. A diſappointment in this expectation was not to be forgiven; even novelty could not excuſe it. Thus early it laid the foundation of a real averſion, and Adela was no longer a favorite. Miſs Wells availed herſelf of the advantage; with a ſneer talked of Adela's *protegée*; and declared that what had paſſed ſhould warn her againſt credulity, vanity, and oſtentation.

Mild

Mild and truly excellent as the diſpoſition of Adela was; ever ready to overlook even to exceſs, and really above being offended at trifles; the repeated inſults of Miſs Wells called forth that true ſpirit, which is ever an attendant on minds of her caſt. She felt herſelf dependant. That pride which would probably have lain dormant in proſperity, now ſtepped in to her aid; and ſhe anſwered Miſs Wells with a tartneſs of which ſhe had believed her incapable. But I have erred in termed this noble impulſe, pride: it is that dignity of ſoul which great minds always feel under the preſſure of calamity. Adela experienced all its force; ſhe felt the ſtings of poverty, aimed only at the ſuperior few, who, not meeting them in the ruſſet garb, bare walls, or humble board, meet them from the inſolence of proſperous fools; on whom, notwithſtanding all their borrowed feathers they cannot fail of looking down with mingled pity and contemp. But oh! dire offence! ſhould they dare to aſſert the rights of human na-

ture, and ſpeak unwelcome truths, who will vindicate their cauſe? Are they not univerſally branded with the charge of ingratitude. "A poor creature like that, to contend with us! Oh! inſufferable!".

In that caſe there was little fear of Adela's offending: ſhe acknowledged, and felt the ſtrongeſt ſenſe of duty and gratitude to her patroneſs; but her heart revolted againſt the tyranny of Miſs Wells, and ſhe incurred the diſpleaſure of her patroneſs by the reply ſhe made her.

A ſullen ſilence reigned for ſome moments, when Mrs. Lennard complained of the increaſe of her illneſs, and Le Roche was diſpatched to ſend a ſervant for Doctor Thurley. At this juncture, a muſic-maſter whom Mrs. Lennard had engaged to attend Adela, came to give her his firſt leſſon; but gladly would ſhe at this time have excuſed his viſit. "I cannot ſee him now," ſaid ſhe to the ſervant, "tell him your lady is ill, and deſire he will call to-morrow." "By no means; let me prevent you, Miſs

North-

Northington. Amelia is my beſt ſociety when ill. I muſt beg you will not neglect your improvements; you will, I dare ſay, find them highly neceſſary, and I am going to my own apartment."

Mrs. Lennard uttered thoſe words in a tone and manner which ſtruck Adela to the ſoul; and leaving the room with Miſs Wells, Adela ſeated herſelf at the harpſichord. The man extolled her performance; and declared with his improvements ſhe would be a perfect prodigy. But ſhe felt herſelf incapable of paying him proper attention. The paſt ſcene perpetually recurred to her; ſhe was little accuſtomed to unkindneſs, and ſilently mourned the loſs of thoſe friends who had never ſubmitted to the government of caprice.

Adela had nearly finiſhed her leſſon, when Lord Wentworth appeared; her expreſſive features marked what paſſed within, and thoſe of his lordſhip evinced the power of ſympathy. She felt the obligation, but as human nature is ever averſe to become

an object of pity, alledged the indiſpoſition of Mrs. Lennard, as the cauſe of her depreſſion.

Mrs. Lennard's bell now rung with violence; a footman haſtily entered the room, ſaying, his lady was in a fit; and Lord Wentworth immediately taking his leave, Adela haſtened up ſtairs. She found Mrs. Lennard in a ſtrong hyſteric fit. Mrs. Le Roche ſupporting her, and Miſs Wells uttering exclamations of ſorrow, as wild and incoherent as if her friend had really been in the agonies of death.

Adela begged ſhe would compoſe herſelf, aſſuring her it would ſoon go off.

Compoſure may be very eaſy to thoſe who are not much concerned, replied Miſs Wells; but when I ſee my beſt, moſt valued friend, thus ill calmneſs could only proceed from indifference. Attentive to Mrs. Lennard, who now began to recover, Adela made no reply; and Miſs Wells throwing herſelf on her knees, bathed her hand with her tears, ſaying, "how are you,

my ever dear Mrs. Lennard? you know not the diftrefs of your Amelia." "Yes, I am deeply fenfible of your goodnefs," replied Mrs. Lennard, with a look of affectionate gratitude; while the tender folicitude of Adela was only repaid with cold neglect. She enquired if Lord Wentworth was gone, and wifhed for the arrival of Dr. Alton. "There is a carriage now ftopped at the door," faid Mrs. Le Roche, "perhaps, it is he," "yes, Madam; it is the Doctor," continued fhe, going to the window. "Thank God," exclaimed Mifs Wells, "never was any thing more welcome to me." She was feated by the fide of Mrs. Lennard, bathed in tears. Doctor Alton entered with folemnity and felf-importance; and after holding Mrs. Lennard's wrift fome moments, enquired, "if fomething had not alarmed her fpirits lately?" fhe faintly anfwered in the negative, and the Doctor went on:

"The extreme delicacy of your feelings, Madam, will certainly endanger your health, unlefs you are very careful to guard againft

 them.

them. "You people of exquiſite ſenſibility, Madam, are liable to perpetual injuries; and here is a lady (meaning Miſs Wells) who ſeems of a ſimilar turn with yourſelf." "But my dear Madam," continued the ſagacious Doctor, (preſſing the hand of Miſs Wells) "do not waſte thoſe precious tears on ideal misfortunes; Mrs. Lennard has only a ſlight hectic fever, which I doubt not will be quite gone by to-morrow." But his remonſtrance was ineffectual: Miſs Wells continued weeping; and Adela though equally concerned, ſat a ſilent obſerver of this very curious ſcene.

Doctor Alton likewiſe attended the family of Sir William Urſell. Mrs. Lennard enquired when he had ſeen them; and was informed, they were really gone to Richmond: but when ſhe mentioned Fanny, the Doctor ſhook his head, ſaying, "I fear that poor girl has dug for herſelf an untimely grave." Mrs. Lennard aſked for an explanation; but was anſwered only by a ſignificant ſhrug of the ſhoulders.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE prediction of Doctor Alton was verified. Mrs. Lennard was restored to Health; and Adela apparently to favor. Gaiety employed their days, and dissipation revelled with unbounded sway. Adela initiated into all the mysteries of high life; but still she retained some vulgar prejudices, which all the lessons of her benefactress could not eradicate. She preferred the conversation of Mrs. Delamaine to the bewitching charms of the card-table, the flutter of fops, and all the et-ceteras that rendered Mrs. Lennard the envy and admiration (to use a fashionable phrase) of all the world. Thither would she often fly to avoid the tiresome repetition of a parade for which she had no taste. There she felt herself at ease; uttered the genuine sentiments of her heart without fear, and was heard with complacency. She secured the friendship of

of Mrs. Delamaine; told her all her little troubles occaſioned by Mrs. Lennard, Miſs Wells, and the too aſſiduous Budenal; ſolicited her advice, and obeyed her precepts. There too ſhe heard the language of Mentor from Lord Wentworth, and their hearts glowed with mutual friendſhip. Forbear reader to anticipate my meaning. Eſteem may give riſe to a tenderer attachment; but it may aſſuredly ſubſiſt without it.

Several revolving months, in ſome meaſure, reconciled Adela to London; and effaced the remembrance of Barton; at leaſt, ſhe thought of it with leſs regret; when a letter from Lady Urſell reminded Mrs. Lennard of that promiſe, which her averſion to green fields and ſhady groves, had hitherto prevented her from performing; but her ladyſhip now repeated her requeſt ſo eloquently, and deſcribed ſo feelingly the illneſs of her beloved Fanny, that Mrs. Lennard could not refuſe her compliance. Adela accompanied her to Rich-

Richmond; and Mr. Budenal was their attendant. His attachment was evident to every obſerver; but as yet, he had not dared to breathe his vows to any but his friend Wentworth; as he was no ſtranger to the indifference of Adela, and feared a haſty declaration would only enſure him a peremptary refuſal. He therefore wiſely reſtrained the violence of his paſſion; and ſought her heart by an attention the moſt delicate, though at the ſame time, pointed.

Charmed with the proſpect of thus diſpoſing of her young friend, who was now in reality no favorite, and whom ſhe conſidered as an incumbrance, Mrs. Lennard was ever laviſhing the higheſt encomiums on Mr. Budenal, and he was included in all their parties; while the company of Lord Wentworth, pleaſing as it was, was declined, becauſe to Adela he was ſomething more than commonly civil; which chiefly originated from ſome obſervations he made on the conduct of Mrs. Lennard and Miſs Wells, very little to their honor. As he

had often heard the latter make the charming Adela the ſubject of her ill-timed ſatire. He was a ſtranger in Hanover-ſquare while Mrs. Lennard ſtayed at Richmond. But not ſo Doctor Alton. He ſaw the aſcendency Miſs Wells was daily gaining over Mrs. Lennard. He thought her handſome, and he beſtowed not a thought on her interior perfections. His little ſtaıched figure marked him the object of female averſion. Again and again had he experienced the mortifying refuſal of ſome contemptuous fair; who wondering at the arrogance of ſuch a being, damped all his high raiſed hopes. The Doctor's ill ſucceſs had determined him to drop his matrimonial purſuits, when the divine Miſs Wells preſented herſelf. She was at firſt inclined to act the tyrant. Budenal was her fancied captive; but when a more powerful rival ſtepped in, and bore away the prize, the little Doctor embraced the happy moment, and again prefered his plea; and Miſs Wells wiſely remembering that ſhe

was no longer young, and could not be much longer beautiful; a treaty of marriage was concluded, during Mrs. Lennard's ſtay at Richmond.

It is ſcarcely poſſible to conceive a ſpot more delightfully picturesque than this ſweet retreat of Sir William Urſell's. There our party ſpent ſeveral days; but the pleaſure they might otherwiſe have experienced, was overclouded by the melancholy ſituation of the declining Fanny, whoſe unſubmitting ſpirit ſtruggled againſt the inevitable ſtroke which all around her ſaw deſcending faſt. Deceived by that moſt flattering of all diſorders, ſhe talked of future happineſs with a gaiety—which often drew tears from her doating parents, and pained the boſom of friendſhip. In vain did Mrs. Lennard uſe every means to diſcover the nature of that ſecret, which undermined the ſprings of her exiſtence. She ſcorned pity, and declared their fears were groundleſs. Miſs Urſell was the only unmoved ſpectator; with her art, (the almoſt conſtant attendant

on

on weak minds) ſupplied the place of ſympathy; but the difference was pretty perceptible: one moment ſhe would mourn the illneſs of her ſiſter; the next toy with the gallant Budenal. Incapable of a real attachment to her, the ſex were all alike by nature a vague coquette. She was perpetually throwing out lures for admiration; but folly never fails to defeat its own purpoſe. Her pretty face attracted many; but that inundation of nonſenſe which perpetually flowed from her lips, frightened them away. Inſenſible of the cauſe of this univerſal deſertion, ſhe often wondered at it; and in reality felt little regret at the impending fate of Fanny; believing her the obſtacle to conqueſt.

In compliance with the whim of Fanny, who tired of Richmond, fancied a return to town would haſten her recovery, the Urſells accompanied our party to London.

Adela by the contrivance of Mrs. Lennard, was placed in the phaeton of Mr. Budenal, who did not fail to avail himſelf

of

of the happy opportunity; but as ſcenes of this ſort make but an awkward figure in deſcription, the reader's imagination will, I doubt not, fill up the blank.

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It was very pathetic; but the object to whom it was addreſſed, was cold as an alabaſter monument. She owned herſelf honored by his preference, but declared the impoſſibility of making the wiſhed for return. "You will, I think," ſays ſhe, "ceaſe to condemn me when you reflect, that the human heart is not to be directed in its choice. Eſteem is all I ever yet have felt for any of your ſex; to that I acknowledge you are juſtly entitled, and I can grant no more." "The eſteem of ſuch a woman," replied the enamoured Budenal, "I value more than the love of all the ſex beſide. Yes, I ought to be content, charming Miſs Northington; I will ſtrive to merit your friendſhip, and glory in the

acqui-

acquiſition; but fain would this ambitious heart aſpire to more." He pauſed: Adela raiſed her eyes to him, and trembled; her ſoul addreſſed a prayer to heaven, to be preverſed from ſuch a choice. She believed his heart good, and ſincerely eſteemed him; but his impetuoſity filled her with a kind of horror. What were his feelings when he queſtioned Lord Wentworth, compared with thoſe which he now endured? One inſtant he aſſumed a calmneſs, praiſed her generoſity, and talked much of the delicacy of his attachment. The next, raving with all the phrenzy of a maniac, emplored her pity, vowed he could not live without her, and denounced ruin on his own wretched head. Diſtreſſed beyond deſcription.

Adela had ſeldom experienced a greater pleaſure then when they arrived in Hanover-ſquare. Like a poor wretch releaſed from perſecution, ſhe ſtepped with alacrity from the carriage; and Budenal whiſpered, "cruel girl! you know not the deſtruction you have cauſed."

They

They found Mrs. Delamaine and Mr. Budenal with Miſs Wells. Fanny Urſell was ſupported from the carriage to the houſe, and fainted. As they conducted her into the parlour, the aſſiduous Budenal flew to her releif; amazed at the alteration in her perſon, he gazed at her with the ſtrongeſt compaſſion; held her in his arms till ſhe recovered, and attended her to Harley-ſtreet.

Miſs Wells gave Adela a card; it was from the brother of her Louiſa: he lamented the diſappointment of not ſeeing her; and Adela felt it equally, but mentioned his deſign of again calling in Hanover-ſquare on his return from whence he was going on a viſit of ſome days. To meet Mr. Amſbury, the friend of her infant years tendered dear to her by the attachment ſhe bore his ſiſter, was indeed an unexpected bleſſing. Adela dwelt on the theme; and Budenal exclaimed with energy, "happy, happy Amſbury! he is truly enviable. What would I not ſacrifice to be of

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of equal importance! But the bleſſing is too great." Adela bluſhed; Miſs Wells ſtared; and Mrs Lennard rallied the love-ſick ſwain. But hope ſtill lived in his boſom; he attributed the reception he had met with to timidity, and reſolved to make trial of the boaſted power of perſeverance.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEFORE dinner was removed in Hanover-ſquare, Theodore Amſbury was announced; and his meeting with Adela was truly expreſſive of their mutual feelings, her language was that of animated friendſhip. A thouſand times he endeavoured to deſcribe the joy he felt; but it was impoſſible. He was received with the utmoſt politeneſs by Mrs. Lennard, and was ſoon left alone with Adela. "I cannot," ſaid he,

"deareſt

" dearest Miss Northington, describe the joy I feel of seeing you thus happy." " I ought, indeed," replied Adela, " to be as happy as you suppose me; and were I to utter a single complaint, I should justly incur the censure of ingratitude; yet I cannot but own, I look back to the serene enjoyments of my native spot, with a regret which all my reasonings are insufficient to conquer. The conversation of your dear sister, the friendship of my ever valued Mr. and Mrs. Smith, the happy home-felt shades of Barton, and all the nameless delights with which it is surrounded, present themselves to my imagination; and cannot, indeed, I cannot but lament their loss." " Yet, Mr. Amsbury," continued she, " I am impressed with the deepest sense of the obligations I owe to Mrs. Lennard, and will strive to merit her affection." Mr. Amsbury thunderstruck at what he heard, was for some moments silent, when taking out his pocket-book, " I have a letter for you," said he, " but it is not here. Can you

you forgive my carelefsnefs?" Hardly indeed" faid Adela; "but I will comfort myfelf with the reflection, that it will fecure me the happinefs of another vifit from you. But have you not likewife brought me a letter from Mrs. Smith?" Mr. Amfbury replied in the negative, and Adela expreffed her furprife. He then related the caufe of his vifit to London; it was the fummons of a rich relation, who refided in Flanders; and offered to make him his heir, if he would go to that country. Adela congratulated him; he coolly thanked her, and preffing her hand, "to-morrow," faid he, with tremulous accents, "I leave England: is it prefumption to claim a place in your remembrance? Oh, Mifs Northington! fometimes deign to beftow a thought on Theodore Amfbury." Adela's emotions were not to be fuppreffed; he turned from her, to conceal his own; when Mifs Wells put an end to the *tete-a-tete*, Mr. Amfbury foon took his leave, and Adela was fummoned to the apartment of Mrs. Lennard.

Adela unconſcious of an event which had happened during her interview with Mr. Amſbury, and which had greatly ruffled the ſerenity of Mrs. Lennard's temper, began to relate the good fortune of that gentleman; but was interrupted with, " Well, there are very few people whoſe affairs I give myſelf any trouble about." Uttered in an angry tone.

Abaſhed at the reproof, Adela was ſilent; and Mrs. Lennard giving her a letter, " Tell me, Miſs Northington," ſaid ſhe, in a ſevere tone, " if that letter contains truth." Adela opened, and read it with preturbation. It was from the impetuous Budenal, ſupplicating the interpoſition of Mrs. Lennard. Her heart accuſed him of indelicacy, and laying down the letter, " it is very true, Madam," ſaid ſhe, " Mr. Budenal had made me an offer which my heart forbad me to accept; and therefore, though I acknowledge the honor he did me, I judged it unneceſſary to trouble you with a recital of it." " You probably

ſuppoſed I ſhould diſapprove of the ſtep," rejoined Mrs. Lennard with haughtineſs, "and I confeſs you had every reaſon for ſuch a belief; but as your beſt friend, I have ſtill ſo much a reliance on your good ſenſe, as to hope you will not perſiſt in being your own enemy; for believe me, ſuch offers do not preſent themſelves every day."

"I hope, Madam," returned Adela, "I ſhall not incur your diſpleaſure by declaring, I wiſh not to change my ſituation at preſent. True, I can make no objection to the perſon, the character, the fortune of Mr. Budenal; they are all unexceptionable: on your indulgence alone I depend; you will, I truſt, conſider my youth, my unconquerable reluctance, and forbear to diſtreſs me on this painful ſubject." "Romance! mere romance!" exclaimed Mrs. Lennard, "to which I fear you will ſacrifice your brighteſt proſpects; and I ſhould be impardonable to enconrage ſuch deluſions. However, you are indoubtedly at liberty

liberty to follow the ſuggeſtions of your own fancy; and I have no more to ſay."

Intimidated at the *hauteur* of Mrs. Lennard, and diſtreſſed at the idea of giving her offence, Adela wavered in her reſolution: ſhe forgot for a moment the charge of her mother, and acquieſced in ſome degree in what her heart revolted againſt. "I will, if poſſible, obey you, Madam," ſaid ſhe; "I will endeavour to ſurmount this perhaps ill grounded prejudice; I know you have a right to command me, and ſorry ſhould I be to incur the charge of ſelf-willed oppoſition."

Mrs. Lennard really charmed with her compliance, embraced her with affection, gave her all the praiſe ſhe merited; and in her anſwer to Mr. Budenal, aſſured him that ſhe was warmly in his intereſt.

Delighted with a reply ſo favourable, the enraptured Budenal haſtened to Hanover-ſquare kiſſed tho fair hands of his better angel, as he termed Mrs. Lennard, and hoped

hoped every thing from her propitious influence.

Adela ſmiled from obedience, and Mr. Amſbury again called. She enquired for his ſiſter's letter, and he deſired to ſpeak to her apart. "That letter," ſaid he, "contains an account that will rather diſtreſs you: willingly would I guard you againſt the extreme ſurpriſe; I know your heart, and feared to give it you, till I could no longer prevent it."

The trembling Adela opened the letter. It was a page replete with woe. The excellent Mr. Smith was no more! and his exemplary widow was left ſtruggling with poverty and Sorrow. With a countenance the emblem of death, Adela ſat with the letter in her hand. She neither wept nor complained; but her ſilent anguiſh deeply affected Mr. Amſbury. He talked on the ſubject, but without producing the deſired effect,—not one tear fell.—But when he uttered his perhaps laſt adieu, high wrought grief was relieved by the tender ſorrow of

parting

parting with an ineſtimable friend; and ſhe wept in agony.

"Let us," ſaid Mr. Amſbury, as he preſſed Adela to his boſom, "look forward to that happineſs which I doubt not is in ſtore for us: ſtill I will indulge the pleaſing hope of again leading you through the delightful ſhades of Faern-hall."

"Oh, recall not thoſe ſcenes to my remembrance," ſaid Adela, in accents ſcarcely intelligible. "Pardon me," replied he, "I meant not to diſtreſs you. Ah, why ſhould I thus wound my own boſom, by a recital of felicity which perhaps to me is for ever loſt." He again pronounced a mournful adieu! called down eternal bleſſings on the head of his fair friend, and tore himſelf from her again. Adela peruſed the letter of her Louiſa; there was a paſſage of comfort in it, which had before eſcaped her: that noble family where Lord Wentworth had known Mr. Smith, generouſly ſtood forth the friends and protectors of his widow, who but for ſuch aſſiſtance muſt

have been reduced to abſolute want. What a melancholy reflection is this! That the inferior clergy of this kingdom, a body of men reſpectable from their profeſſion, and oftentimes rendered ſtill more ſo by their virtues: their lives ſpent in good offices to the ſouls and bodies of that little flock which the Almighty has ſubmitted to their charge, are in general ſo ſcantily provided for! The poor youth juſt emerged from college, whoſe poſſeſſions are all mental, obtains a curacy of thirty: or (if he is very fortunate) perhaps forty or fifty pounds *per annum*. With this *immenſe* income he muſt ſupport the appearance of a gentleman. With ideas much ſuperior to his ſituation, he is in perpetual diſtreſs. His friends adviſe him to the divine employment of a fortune-hunter, and with ſome reluctance he acquieſces. But ah, ſad miſhap! he falls in love with ſome female, in all probability as poor as himſelf.

This fruſtrates all his ſchemes; he gives up his project, and confines the unfortu-

nate

nate attachment to his own breaſt. In time he poſſibly becomes a tutor in ſome great family. His youth waſtes in dependance. Through the intereſt of his patron, he may obtain the gift of ſome poor vicarage: thither he retires. The woman of his heart is long ſince diſpoſed of. Weary of a life of ſolitude, he looks around him for a companion ſuited to his years. If he makes a happy choice, a ray of comfort may gild the evening of his life. Domeſtic peace, and the whiſpers of an approving conſcience, may in ſome meaſure efface from his remembrance the painful viciſſitudes of his earlier days.

But when he dies, what is to become of his widow? her only reſource is charity.

Such was the tenor of Mr. Smith's life; ſuch were the virtues that rendered him dear to his adopted daughter.

But when, as is often the caſe, we ſee the numerous family of a poor divine left void of ſupport, muſt it not extort a ſigh from every Chriſtian heart, and render the

excel-

excellence of our church government doubted?

See their daughters expoſed to infamy: is it not alas! too common? Liſten to the voice of humanity, ye who have power to redreſs ſuch evils.

It was a ſubject which ſpoke to the heart of Adela; and ſhe was truly thankful to heaven for that protection which Mrs. Smith had found. "Such a character," ſaid ſhe, "muſt needs be the peculiar care of heaven." Unable to bear the impertinence of gaiety, ſhe ſent an excuſe to Mrs. Lennard, and retired to her apartment. Mr. Budenal ſoon took his leave; and her Louiſa's letter explained to the ladies the cauſe of her diſtreſs.

Pleaſed with her late acquieſcence, Mrs. Lennard omitted no argument that could tend to alleviate her ſorrow, with which even Miſs Wells appeared to ſympathiſe. They ſpent the evening in her apartment, and mentioned Miſs Wells's union with Doctor Alton as an event not very diſtant.

Mrs. Len-

Mrs. Lennard related it merely to amuſe Adela: to do her juſtice, ſhe was kindly aſſiduous to prevent the admiſſion of melancholy ideas. But in vain; a complication of diſtreſſing circumſtances preyed on the mind of Adela. The words and manner of Mr. Amſbury, when he bade her adieu, left a deep impreſſion; he ſeemed to feel more than was due to a friendſhip of childhood. A vain female would have attributed ſuch a diſtinction to love. Adela believed it the effect of a mind above the vulgar; and gratitude repaid the generous concern he evinced for her welfare. But when ſhe recurred to that equivocal promiſe, which fear had extorted, reſpecting Mr. Budenal, her mind was transfixed with a thouſand arrows: add to thoſe her poignant ſorrow for the loſs of her valuable friend. Who that recollects the extreme delicacy of Adela's nature, often honored with the kind appellation of weakneſs, can wonder that a fever was the conſequence? She felt it firſt on her ſpirits. Sleep the only relief

which the wretched experience in this vale of woe, denied its kindly influence; yet ſhe felt within her boſom an internal comforter, and all was reſignation.

Believing her illneſs only tranſient, ſhe concealed it; aroſe at her uſual hour, and accompanied Mrs. Lennard in her enquiries after their favourite fanny. Her they found far worſe then when ſhe left Richmond. For the firſt time, ſhe appeared conſcious of her approaching diſſolution. Her mother ſat by her ſide in tears. "Come hither," ſaid the expiring girl. When Mrs. Lennard entered the room: "I have ſomething to impart to you," Mrs. Lennard obeyed her. "You ſuſpect," ſaid ſhe, "my illneſs proceeds from the mind, nor are you deceived. Often have you ſought the cauſe, without ſucceſs; but I have now received the ſummons of death,—and what are the opinions of the world to me? Ah! how different are my feelings at this moment, from thoſe which guided my actions in the hour of health? how plainly do I ſee

my errors, and how ſincerely lament them! Pride and diſſimulation governed me." "I was unworthy your love," graſping the hand of her weeping mother, "but now they are gone," continued ſhe, after a pauſe, "and I ſcruple not to declare my weakneſs." An involuntary paſſion ſeized on the ſprings of life. I ſtruggled with it long; but I am vanquiſhed. And the object of it—(looking ardently in Mrs. Lennard's face) faulters on my tongue. But here is his image, (taking from her pocket a ſhagreen caſe) I ſtole that picture, and he believes it loſt. Long has it been my only comforter, and it ſhall be my companion in the grave."

She bedewed it with her tears, and gave it to Mrs. Lennard. It was the portrait of Auguſtus Melville. Blendid grief, and aſtoniſhment poſſeſſed every mind preſent. The ſcene was too much for Adela; ſhe was obliged to be conveyed out of the room.

" Why, my ſweet girl!" ſaid lady Urſell, " why have you thus perſiſted in this cruel concealment? Is it now too late? Shall I ſend for Mr. Melville? Your father will talk to him, perhaps his heart is diſengaged."

Ah! Madam, how little do you know mine!" was her reply, " Never, never breathe it to him! What can it now avail? only perhaps to make him think meanly of me, when I am no more."

" Death, I feel, is inevitable: I have ſatisfied my friends, and relieved my own heart: but I am ſuperior to the wiſh of dying in his arms, according to the folly of romance; an employment of far more conſequence now engroſſes my mind. I am the victim of an enthuſiaſtic attachment; but be aſſured, could I be reſtored to health, I would ſcorn his proffered hand, as the debt of gratitude."

The hectic bloom that croſſed her cheek as ſhe uttered thoſe words, plainly demonſtrated, ſhe ſtill retained ſome dregs of pride.

Mrs. Len-

Mrs. Lennard left her, promiſing to return in the evening; and Fanny whiſpered when ſhe bade her adieu, "Comfort my mother when I am no more."

Deeply affected, Mrs. Lennard followed Miſs Urſell to the parlour, where Adela was ſitting with Sir William. He enquired for Fanny, but was anſwered only with tears, the emblem of diſtreſs: he conducted them to the carriage.

The paſt ſcene dwelt ſtrongly on the mind of Mrs. Lennard. "How ſtriking," ſaid ſhe, is the melancholy fate of my young friend? Thus early in life to be the martyr of ſtrong and unconquerable paſſions! How extraordinary!" She looked at Adela, expecting a reply; but ſhe was incapable of making any. Her illneſs could be no longer concealed: ſhe put her hand on Mrs. Lennard's wriſt; it beſpoke a raging fever.

CHAPTER XIX.

MRS. LENNARD extremely alarmed, the inſtant the carriage ſtopped in Hanover-ſquare; diſpatched a ſervant for Doctor Alton, who inſtantly obeyed the ſummons. After conſulting the pulſe of Adela, with a countenance the moſt unpropitious, he wrote his preſcription, and retired. The diſorder increaſed with rapidity. It raged with fury many weeks. Death ſhook his dart at Adela, but the ſtroke was averted from her, and Fanny Urſell felt the mortal wound. It was a melancholy period to Mrs. Lennard. One hour ſhe was in Harley-ſtreet, adminiſtering conſolation to the mourning parents of the ill-fated Fanny: the next, ſupporting the drooping Adela. Miſs Wells, whoſe governing principle, envy, perpetually excited by Adela in the bloom of health, was in ſome meaſure, diſarmed of her malevolence, by the power

of

of ſickneſs: but for one remaining circumſtance, would have been in reality her friend. But Budenal as an inſurmountable barrier; his ardent love, extreme anxiety, and unremitting attention ſhe could not behold unmoved. Aſide ſhe after turned to hide the emotions it cauſed; yet as ſhe no longer obtruded herſelf on every eye, and monopolized the deſirable tribute of adoration which Miſs Wells ſo often ſighed for, ſhe ſtrove to forget her involuntary offence, and found ſome comfort in the unwearied aſſiduity of her charming intended; whoſe impatience to make the lovely Amelia his, was truly fortunate for Adela, as it made him ſtudious to haſten her recovery: which alone retarded their nuptials.

The tenderneſs with which Budenal had watched over his adored Adela, was not laviſhed on an ungrateful heart.

"No longer," ſaid ſhe, "can I refuſe this generous man the only return in my power to make. Would to Heaven I could

 love

him as he deserves. Be ſtill, thou froward heart, I will force thee to be juſt: I will ſacrifice thy ill grounded reluctance, to ſecure the happineſs of a worthy man, who merits a much higher reward; and ſurely that providence, to whom I fain would yield implicit obedience, will approve the action."

This was the firſt reſolution Adela made after her recovery: ſhe engaged her hand to Budenal, and every moment he anticipated the accompliſhment of that promiſe, which he declared, and ſealed the vow upon her ſnowy hand, would make him the happieſt of mortals. But ſtill there was a chilly coldneſs in the manner of Adela, which ſhe wanted the power to conceal; it did not eſcape the jealous obſervation of her impetuous lover, and often made him act the mad-man.

"For he had paſſions which out-ſtripped the wind,
"And rooted up his reaſon."—

Nor was Lord Wentworth, during the confinement of Adela, void of anxiety; but

but real friendſhip for Budenal, and genuine delicacy reſpecting Adela, prevented the diſcovery of it. Once indeed he went to Hanover-ſquare, after the recovery of Adela, and by an eulogium which eſcaped him in the abſence of Adela, offended Mrs. Lennard almoſt paſt forgiveneſs.

He pronounced Adela, " poſſeſſed of more native ſenſe, native grace, and real elegance, than any of the town bred Miſſes that had ever came under his obſervation." A moment's recollection, added to the angry ſuffuſion that overſpread the countenance of Mrs. Lennard, ſhewed his lordſhip the impropriety of ſuch a declaration; and moſt ſeverely did he in ſilence reproach himſelf. " Surely," thought he, " a bye-ſtander would hardly believe his ſenſes at ſeeing the cool Wentworth act thus inconſiſtently. Ah! how little do the world ſuſpect the real ardour of my ſoul! That quickneſs of feeling, which I bluſh to own even to myſelf. Down, down, tumultuous heart! Wentworth thou mayeſt eſteem the

lovely Adela; but friendſhip requires thee to promote, if poſſible, the cauſe of another in her heart: that other, the brother of thy ſoul, entitled to her affection by a claim prior to thine; entitled to thy good offices, by a confidence which ſhall never be abuſed. But ſhould he ſuſpect thy weakneſs? Could he know that my hour is really come? Perhaps,—yes, perhaps, he would triumph over me, and bleſs his happier ſtars."

Mrs. Lennard during the interval of this reverie, angry and ſilent, weary of a companion who afforded her ſo little entertainment, was anxiouſly deſirous of Lord Wentworth's departure. In vain he endeavoured to palliate his offence; to excuſe his low ſpirits. In vain, he addreſſed ſome very flattering ſpeeches to Mrs. Lennard: ſhe was only barely civil.

But let me not forget Mrs. Delamaine, ever the zealous friend of Adela. That lady appropriated to her afflicted young friend, all her leiſure hours; liſtened to thoſe ani-

madverſions

madverſions which Mrs. Lennard (now undeceived reſpecting the power ſhe long enjoyed in idea over the heart of Lord Wentworth) frequently made: confined her ſtrictures to her boſom, while her heart regretted the force which Adela was impoſing on herſelf. Solicited by one of her beſt friends, (a gentleman of her own name eminent in the law) to accompany him in a viſit to his country retreat, ſituated in one of the moſt delightful countries that ſurround this metropolis. She thought ſuch an excurſion would materially contribute to the recovery of Adela; and having with ſome difficulty obtained the conſent of Mrs. Lennard, who with great gravity hoped Lord Wentworth was not to accompany them, as ſhe feared he was a very deſigning young man, in whom they were all miſtaken, and from whoſe dangerous ſociety, ſhe thought it her duty to reſtrain the unſuſpicious Adela; as ſhe ſhould in future rather avoid his company herſelf. concluding with " you know, Madam, it is

a period, when the conduct of Miſs Northington will be narrowly obſerved; her engagement to a man of rank renders her conſpicuous." Mrs. Delamaine politely bowed a reply to thoſe wiſe remarks. Scarcely able to ſuppreſs a laugh, excited by the real motive of Mrs. Lennard's reſtriction; but being aſſured that they expected no viſiter but Adela, ſhe took her leave, to learn from Doctor Delamaine the time he propoſed leaving town.

Rejoiced at an event ſo agreeable to her wiſhes, Adela felt a vivacity to which ſhe had been ſome time a ſtranger; and the happy Budenal, who joined them at this juncture, experienced its pleaſing influence.

When Mrs. Delamaine returned, he received an invitation to honour Spring-Vale with his preſence; and ſhe informed Adela, that the next morning was fixed on for their departure.

To Doctor Alton this intelligence was truly welcome; it was accompanied by a gracious promiſe from his Amelia, that

made his little grey eyes twinkle, and wrinkled his face with ſmiles; "A few days," ſays ſhe, "and I will be yours for ever."

CHAPTER XX.

MR. LANCASTER's chariot ſtopped in Hanover ſquare at the appointed hour. Adela had never ſeen this gentleman before; but was now introduced to him.

He was a faithful friend of Mrs. Delamaine's; his fortune was conſiderable, and he ſtill poſſeſſed a majeſtic perſon, in ſpite of the devaſtation of time. His company was courted by the young, the gay, the beautiful; for though he had ſeen fourſcore ſummers, he ſtill poſſeſſed great ſtrength of memory, and great brilliancy of imagination, which we rarely ſee combined: qualities

lities indeed, which, as is well obſerved by Mr. Stewart in his elements of philoſophy in contradiction to vulgar prejudice, are frequently found in conjunction. Adela detained them not long: ſhe bade adieu to Mrs. Lennard and Miſs Wells; and being ſeated between her newly acquired friends, the hours fled imperceptibly, till they ſtopped at the moſt enchanting cottage that the gay pencil of imagination ever drew. It was ſituated on the ſide of a hill, teeming with ten thouſand variegated beauties. The landſcape, as far as the eye could reach, was wildly romantic; and the gardens with which this Arcadian abode was ſurrounded, ſeemed the work of nature only. But her fair handmaid's taſte,—that traces her ſteps, improves her beauties, and corrects her faults, had traverſed each ſhady alley, reared the gay alcove, guided the courſe of the water-fall, and given the finiſhing ſtroke to her miſtreſs's production.

Many elegant villas were ſcattered around them, and with ſome of their owners

Mr. Lancaſter was on the moſt intimate footing. But they were only a favored few, who were admitted within the wicket-gate, by which he gained an entrance to Spring-Vale; and among thoſe few, Sir John Powell was ever one of the moſt welcome; as Mr. Lancaſter had lived in the ſtricteſt intimacy with the father of this gentleman, till death had put an end to the union produced by a ſimilarity of ſentiment. It was therefore natural, that the virtues of the father ſhould have endeared the ſon to a man who was ſo thoroughly acquainted with their value.

Sir John happened, at this time, to be induced by the pleaſures of the chace to viſit his ſeat at Willow-Place; and his preſence was agreeably ſurprizing to Mr. Lancaſter, as he had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of his having ſuch a deſign: for Sir John had purpoſely concealed his intention.

Adela had ſeen this gentleman before at Sir William Urſell's; but he now communicated a piece of intelligence which occa-

ſioned

ſioned her ſome very unpleaſing emotions. Lord Wentworth, Mr. Melville, &c. were to be at Willow Place in a few days, there to remain during the hunting ſeaſon.

The countenance of Adela evinced the feelings of her heart, as ſhe liſtened to this relation. She remembered the prohibition of Mrs. Lennard; yet ſurely, recollection added, it cannot extend here. Yet ſhe could not be eaſy; and when an opportunity offered, ſhe informed Mrs. Delamaine of her fears, who only laughed at them, ſaying, "ſurely my dear, Mrs. Lennard cannot think of excluding Lord Wentworth from every circle, where chance may lead herſelf or family; therefore do not make yourſelf unhappy about ſuch a chimera."

This aſſurance quieted the ſcruples of Adela.

It was a delightful evening. Autumn was habited in her beſt robe. Mr. Lancaſter, who always indulged himſelf with a nap after dinner, had not yet made his appearance; and Mrs. Delamaine, to amuſe

her young friend propofed a walk. The gardens had hitherto been the utmoft limits of their rambles. They now ftrolled round them. There was a green mount at the end, and a fmall white gate, which was within a few yards of a foot-path, that led to the neighbouring village.

Adela reclined her arm on the gate, and furveyed the fcene with attention. It was the time when the laborious peafant having ended his daily toil, fat whiftling, or finging at the door of his humble habitation, waiting the appearance of fome fair village-maid, whom when he fpies, joy animates his honeft face; and taking from her arm the well-fcowered pail, conducts her to the neighburing-field; where feated by her fide, while fhe performs her evening tafk, he whifpers in her ear his artlefs tale of love.

A variety of well remembered fcenes, replete with ruftic blifs arofe to her mutual view, "Surely," (faid fhe, totally forgetful of Mrs. Delamaine, who had left her to fupport the drooping branches of a wood-

bine

bine that furrounded the entrance of a fmall temple) "the lot of yonder female, who is holding her fides with laughter at fome mirthful tale, which that old woman bent with age, and fupported on a crutch feems relating, is truly enviable, ruddy health, and peace of mind is painted in her blooming countenance. True fhe is a ftranger to every refinement of life; but fhe is likewife excluded from thofe agonizing cares, which that refinement, often introduces: and all that train of ills attendant on the great: which yet I only know in theory. And what—continued fhe fighing—" are all the joys of affluence to a heart like mine. Ah! my lamented, my excellent mother! When will this heart ceafe to regret thee and Barton? Yet I ought, and will ftrive to be happy. It is the debt of gratitude I owe Heaven and my friends, and ———".

"What moralizing," faid Mrs. Delamaine, tapping her on the fhoulder, "come what think you of returning?" "I think," replied Adela, "it is a pity to return fo foon. Is

there

there no gaining an entrance through this gate? I want you to introduce me to ſome of theſe happy cottagers." "That I can eaſily do:" returned Mrs. Delamaine, "for I am well known to many of them; but it is a miſtaken notion ariſing from inexperience, which indiſcriminately affixes happineſs to a cottage life: for believe me, it is confined to no ſtation; but depends ſolely on ourſelves: for even among thoſe ruſtics, the vices and miſeries of courts dwell in miniature; and too frequently do they repine at the allotment of Heaven, and their boſom ſwell with envy at the fancied felicity of their ſuperiors. Thus baleful diſcontent has her votaries in every rank of life. The ſtateſman wearied with the tumult of faction retires to the manſion of his forefathers, and believes every ſimple clown that he ſees, poſſeſſed of that ineſtimable gem, in the purſuit of which he has ſpent his whole life: while the phantom ſtill eluding his graſp,—he has nothing left but an emaciated body,—and a heart torn

with

with a long lift of agonizing cares. He fighs, amid the fmiles of beauty, the fyren founds of flattery, and all the voluptuous offerings of luxury: and pronounces them all nothing when placed in competition with health and ferenity of mind But turn to the reverfe of the picture, and behold the envied peafant groaning beneath the yoke of labour. He returns from the plough, and paffing the great man's gate, murmurs at his hard lot, prefumptuoufly queftions unerring wifdom,* and haftens home fullen, and (too often) brutal to his unoffending family.

Adela liftened without being convinced: nothing but demonftration could alter her opinion. She enquired for the key of the garden gate: but Mrs. Delamaine faid they muft defer their walk till after tea in confideration of Mr. Lancafter, and Adela acquiefced in the propriety of this determination. On entering the parlour he exclaimed, he had given them over for loft. Mrs. Delamaine defcribed Adela's folicitude

to be introduced to their ruſtic neighbours; he begged he might not be the means of preventing her, and with great good humour requeſted permiſſion to make one in the group; which being readily admitted, they again bent their courſe through the garden.

Adela's hands were filled with flowers, when they reached the ſpot of her former meditation. "You are empowered with ſweets Miſs Northington," ſaid Mr. Lancaſter. She made no reply, but ſelecting a ſprig of intermingled jaſmine, roſes, and honey-ſuckle, preſented it to him with the air of an Hebe. The old gentleman received it with evident pleaſure, and when Mrs. Delamaine was unlocking the gate, he placed the flowers in the white chip hat of Adela, ſaying, "The only return in my power is to ornament the lovely donor with her own gifts; although even that is a preſumption which calls to my remembrance the words of my countryman Thomſon:

"For lovelineſs needs not the foreign aid of ornament."

Adela was highly amuſed and delighted with the Doctor's gallantry: becauſe it was pleaſing to himſelf.

They now arrived at the village; Adela was prepared for new obſervations, by what Mrs. Delamaine had ſaid in oppoſition to the fancied felicity of rural life; but ſhe went with a firm perſuaſion that ſhe ſhould confute the opinion of that lady by undeniable proofs. They entered many of the cottages and converſed with their inhabitants, all ſeemed to favor Adela's ſide of the queſtion; but they only beheld the faireſt ſide: labour was at this ſeaſon laid aſide, and ſport and merriment revelled at large.

They paſſed through the village and were deſcending into a delightful valley. Adela was loſt in contemplating the beauties of the ſurrounding ſcene; when her attention was engaged by a poor decrepid old man, groaning under a heavy load of faggots, followed by a girl apparently about eight years of age who was carrying the tools with which the faggots had been cut, and weeping bitterly

bitterly: while the old man frequently turned round rebuking her with great ſeverity, and went on murmuring. "Is it poſſible?" ſaid Mrs. Delamaine, "to imagine a more ſtriking emblemn of miſery and diſcontent, then that poor man exhibits." I will enquire into the cauſe," ſaid Adela with quickneſs, and approached him for that purpoſe; but the auſterity of his aſpect frightened her: he muttered ſomething as ſhe paſt him, and ſtruck into another path. The child was ſtill ſobbing, and taking up the corner of a piece of check that had once been an apron, wiped her face, and ſmiling dropped a courteſy. "What makes you cry thus?" ſaid Adela? "Grandfather has been beating me," replied the child, "becauſe I can't cut wood." "Pretty creature you ſeem very unfit for the office;" returned Adela, "but is that old man your grandfather?" Yes," ſaid the child, "and he is very croſs, and beats me very often ſince my mamma died." "Your mamma!" ſaid Adela, "and where did your mamma

 live?"

live?" "Oh! ſhe lived with grandfather," replied the child, "and I always wore white frocks before ſhe died, and they called me, Miſs Livy." "And what did they call your mamma?" "They always called her, Madam." "What is your grandfather's name?" ſaid Mrs. Delamaine: who with Mr. Lancaſter had joined Adela during the interrogation. "Robert Wilkins," ſhe replied. Mr. Lancaſter now recollected the old man perfectly; who having miſſed the child, had thrown down his wood, and was haſtening back in great anger, to correct her for ſtaying behind. But Adela and her friends interpoſed, telling him they had detained her. This aſſurance and the preſence of Mr. Lancaſter and Mrs. Delamaine, whom he had before paſſed unobſerved, pacified him. Adela put a trifle into the child's hand, and Mrs. Delamaine told the rigid old man, ſhe ſhould call the next day at his habitation. A tranſient gleam of good humour croſſed his face at this inſtance of condeſcenſion, and taking

the child by the hand, he haſtily left them.

"What a beautiful creature that is," ſaid Adela, "and how myſterious is what ſhe has related. She is certainly ſuperior to what ſhe now appears."

This was an opinion in which her friends joined her: and Mrs. Delamaine again declared ſhe would the next day viſit the old man's cottage.

But Adela could not avoid dwelling on the uncommon lovelineſs of the poor child, about whom ſhe was ſo much concerned. Imagination cannot paint a form more perfectly charming. Her flaxen ringlets hung waving and neglected over her lovely ſhoulders: which the rags ſhe wore were inſufficient to ſhield from the various inclemencies of the weather. Her fine dark blue eyes were adorned with long ſable laſhes, which conſiderably heightened their beauty: every other feature beſpoke the hand of ſymmetry: and delicacy united with health to form her complexion.

Every ſyllable the child uttered was ſtrongly imprinted on Adela's mind, and ſhe could ill brook the delay of to-morrow; but Mr. Lancaſter unuſed to ſuch long walks complained of fatigue, and politeneſs forbad her to oppoſe their return.

"There is ſomething very remarkable," ſaid ſhe, "in my ardent deſire of walking this evening: it was ſurely the inſpiration of Heaven."

Mrs Delamaine ſmiled: they entered the foot-path that led to the garden-gate, when the trampling of horſes, and the ſound of ſeveral voices caught their attention: they liſtened a moment, and one of the party raiſing his voice, called out, "Wentworth, what a lazy fellow you are, lingering there behind: come here, and I'll ſhew you that elegant little villa of Mr. Lancaſter's which you have heard ſo much off." "It is Mr. Melville, Madam," ſaid Adela. Mrs. Delamaine ran to the high quick-ſet hedge that ſeparated them, and the firſt object that preſented himſelf was Lord

Wentworth,

Wentworth, who was looking moſt wiſtfully at their habitation.

" And what do you diſcover there, that makes you look ſo doleful," exclaimed Mrs. Delamaine. His lordſhip ſtarted at the well known voice, and ſpringing from his horſe, made his way through the intervening hedge. They now joined Adela and Mr. Lancaſter, the latter of whom was highly entertained at the ſurpriſe of Lord Wentworth on diſcovering Mrs. Delamaine; but the agitation of Adela prevented her from ſharing in the mirth: ſhe trembled, his lordſhip was embarraſſed, and they mutually faltered out a heap of inconſiſtencies. But the vivacity of their friends, in ſome meaſure, reſtored their wonted eaſe, and his lordſhip ſent his ſervant on to inform his friends of the rencontre.

CHAPTER XXI.

ADELA entered the garden leaning on Mr. Lancaſter's arm: and Mrs. Delamaine followed with Lord Wentworth; ſhe related to him their recent adventure, and on her mentioning the child's name, he exclaimed, " Miſs Livy did you ſay, Madam? " Oh, it is to me a well remembered name!" The exclamation ſtruck Adela, and ſhe turned round expecting ſome information that might affect her little cottager. But his lordſhip after a momentary ſilence, ſeeming to recollect himſelf, ſaid to Adela, " Mrs. Delamaine has been giving me a recital of the myſterious incident you have juſt met with: and the name of the child recalls to my remembrance a lady,—that is now no more." He uttered thoſe words in a manner that beſpoke him no indifferent party to the fate of that lady, who or whatever ſhe might be. But although

though it excited her curiosity, and encreased her surprise, delicacy forbad her making any further enquiries: as distress was very evident, through his lordship's efforts to conceal it.

They were entering the house when Mr. Melville joined them, almost breathless; and by his presence gave a different turn to the conversation. He spoke in raptures of the pleasures this meeting afforded him, it was an unexpected satisfaction—: as he was by his absence from Town ignorant of their being at Spring-Vale. Nor was Lord Wentworth acquainted with it: for since that fatal day when he incurred the resentment of Mrs. Lennard, his visits to Hanover-square had been ineffectual; and not suspecting the real cause his not being admitted as usual was a paradox: for the explanation of which he applied to Adela, who likewise pleaded ignorance.

After some time spent in discussing various topics, the gentlemen arose to depart; but Mrs. Delamaine entreated them so forcibly

to partake of the ſimple repaſt with which the table was already ſpread, that there was no reſiſting her eloquence: and ever aſſiduous to render thoſe around her happy, ſhe exerted with more than uſual ſpirit that pleaſantry, for which ſhe was ever remarkable. She likewiſe called forth her poetic talents, and made an extempore ſong on Lord Wentworth, replete with drollery: hoping it might contribute to remove that cloud of melancholy, in which he was evidently involved; but all her efforts were ineffectual: it was not at this period in the power of mortal to amuſe him. Adela's depreſſion was equally conſpicuous, her anxiety originated from motives, nearly ſimilar to thoſe of his lordſhip's: and for the firſt time ſhe rejoiced when (in compliance with Mr. Melville, who reminded him they ſhould be given over for loſt at Willow-Place) he bade them adieu, telling Mrs. Delamaine he ſhould ſoon intrude again. "For," ſaid he in a low voice, "ſetting aſide the inducement I muſt ever have to

viſit

viſit here, I feel myſelf intereſted about your morning's excurſion." Will you accompany us?" ſaid Mrs. Delamaine. He gladly acquieſced, and a tear, which was obſerved by Adela, and her only, gliſtened in his eye, as he left the room.

They went, and the immortal part of Adela ſeemed to quit its native abode, when having followed them with her eye to the wicket-gate; Lord Wentworth turned round, and ſeeing her in the window, kiſſed his hand with a kind of rapture, and inſtantly diſappeared. A ſtupor fixed her to the ſpot, the veil was removed, and ſhe at this moment diſcovered the true ſtate of her heart: for ſhe had till now believed her feelings in favor of Lord Wentworth, to be only the effect of that warm approbation which a ſoul like hers (enthuſiaſtically nice and delicate, even in a choice of friends) muſt feel at the diſcovery of merit, ſuperior to thoſe vulgar mortals, who tread the ſtage of life: and after fluttering a few ſhort

moments, drop into the cavern of oblivion, and are loſt for ever.

This was all Adela confeſſed even to herſelf until this evening; but ſhe now felt the attachment of a kindred ſoul, and all the reſt of mankind, were to her, nothing.

The converſation of her friends diſtreſſed her, ſhe wiſhed to be alone: ſhe talked indeed; but it was mere words, the head, and the heart, were otherwiſe employed: and when ſhe parted with Mrs. Delamaine for the night, Lord Wentworth, Mr. Budenal, poor Miſs Livy, and a long liſt which imagination will eaſily ſuggeſt, paſſed in ſucceſſion through her mind, and prevented the viſit of Morpheus, till the grey eyed morn peeped in at her chamber windows, and the martlet trilled his matin ſong. She then fell into a ſweet ſlumber, and fancy brought Louiſa Amſbury to ſooth her troubled mind.

It was to this friend of her heart that ſhe owed the involuntary attachment ſhe had juſt

discovered, and for the first time, mourned her humble lot; but Mrs. Delamaine awoke her and the confession was unfinished.

CHAPTER XXII.

WITH the returning day, Adela felt an increase of disquietude. "Surely," said she, "my guardian angel must have neglected his charge, when my tongue pronounced that fatal promise to Mr. Budenal. But now what is to be done, whither or how can I fly from this criminal engagement? Oh! preserve me, Heaven? What! marry one man with the image of another ingraved on my heart? Dreadful reflection! Yet it must be so. What but a miracle can now save me?"

"I am

" I am doomed to be the ſacrifice of my own timidity." She wept; again ſhe prefered a prayer to Heaven, and reſolving to chace from her boſom the charming Alfred; walked into the garden in ſearch of Mrs. Delamaine. There they breakfaſted unreſtrained by Mr. Lancaſter, who ſeldom appeared till noon. The uncommon beauty of the morning. The wild concert of the groves: and the converſation of Mrs. Delamaine, in ſome meaſure, reſtored Adela's wonted ſerenity.

They talked of their cottage excurſion, and only waited the arrival of Lord Wentworth. He ſoon appeared at the gate attended only by his ſervant. Mr. Melville was enquired for. " He could not reſiſt the temptation of a hunt this morning," replied his lordſhip, ſtriving to ſuppreſs a ſigh; but it would not be ſuppreſſed, and the heart of Adela echoed it. " Will you go, Madam?" ſaid ſhe; Mrs. Delamaine ſmiled and acquieſced.

When

When they arrived at the cottage, the child was cutting herbs in a ſmall garden through which they paſſed. The inſtant ſhe ſaw Adela they dropped from her hand: and taking up her cap, which during the employment had fallen off; ſhe came running up to her. Lord Wentworth gazed at her, but uttered not a word: and Adela taking her by the hand, they entered the houſe.

An old woman, the picture of neatneſs: with a countenance which wore the blended traces of ſorrow and age; was buſied in preparing a frugal and wholeſome meal, againſt the return of her laborious partner. "Here is the pretty lady I told you about, come to ſee you," ſaid the child.

The old woman was ſtirring her broth, and turning round with the ladle in her hand, ſtarted! at ſeeing ſuch fine folks; but recollecting Mrs. Delamaine, ſhe ſaid, "Robert had told her how good that lady had been in promiſing to call and ſee his poor old dame." And after many acknowledgments

ments of their condeſcenſion; ſhe conducted them into an adjoining room; which ſhe called their hall: and begging their honors would be ſeated, diſappeared.

" Nature ſurely never deſigned this lovely creature for a cottage. " ſaid Lord Wentworth, who had never taken his eyes off the child from the moment of their entrance, nor till then opened his lips, " ſhe is all beauty, and native elegance: and ſeems much fitter to adorn a court."

He ſeated her on his knee, and preſſed her to his boſom. She gazed at him with ſurprize; unuſed to ſuch careſſes, and as ſoon as ſhe regained her liberty ran out of the room.

His lordſhip was diſturbed, and ſtarting from his ſeat walked up and down ſeemingly unconcious where he was. The old woman entered laden with a variety of fruits; and the child followed with a loaf of bread and a jug of cream.

" I offer your honors," ſaid the good woman, " with a grateful heart, the beſt

produce of my homely cottage: and if you will be pleaſed to taſte them, I ſhall never forget your goodneſs as long as I live." The table was covered with fruit, and the jug of cream was placed in the middle. It reminded Adela of the repaſt which the immortal Milton makes our firſt parents provide their celeſtial viſitant: and to gratify their kind hoſteſs, Mrs. Delamaine and Adela taſted of her gifts. "Will you not partake?" ſaid they to Lord Wentworth. "I cannot," he replied with emotion, and turning to the old woman ——— "Pray, my good dame," ſaid he, "is this child any relation to you?" "Not much," replied ſhe with heſitation. "I intreat you?" rejoined his lordſhip, "to tell me truly, who and what ſhe is? for I have great reaſon to believe myſelf intereſted, and truſt me you ſhall not loſe by your ſincerity."

Mrs. Delamaine and Adela ſat the emblems of amazement, and the woman wept. Adela enquired what diſtreſſed her?—— "Ah! Madam," ſhe replied, "I muſt needs cry,

cry, when I think of my poor lady; ſhe lived in our poor cottage many a year.—Ah! ſhe was beautiful as an angel.—Yes, and good as an angel too. I do ſay it, though to be ſure you might not think ſo, if you knew all. I ſhall never forget her laſt words. — "Oh! my good Sarah," ſaid ſhe, a few minutes before ſhe died. "take care of my infant: and tell your ſon to carry this box to my brother, he knows him; and tell my poor child," taking a picture from her boſom, "this is the portrait of her father. Farewel, obey my injunctions and God will reward you." "So ſaying,' continued Sarah, (weeping and kiſſing the child's forhead) "ſhe ſunk on her pillow and expired without a groan: and a white tomb-ſtone at the end of the path, which led from our garden into the church-yard, diſtinguiſhes her grave."

The child ſobbed in concert with the old woman, and pity moiſtened every eye preſent; but that of Lord Wentworth: his was expreſſive of ſtranger emotions.

"And

" And did you," he enquired, " comply with the dying requeſt of this unhappy lady?" No your honor," replied Sarah, " it is for that I partly grieve. I would fain have done what her ladyſhip commanded; but my huſband is a hard-hearted man: and he threatened my life, if I durſt ſpeak a word about the matter. So he broke open the box: and there was a little money in it; but I don't know how —, it was ſoon ſpent: and we have been poorer then ever ſince. But the picture I never let him know a word about: I keep that myſelf: and it is wrapt up in ſome paper with writing upon it, that my poor lady left in the box. I don't know what it is about: for we can't read writing: and I told Robert as how I would burn it, becauſe he ſaid, it might bring us into miſchief; but I would as ſoon burn my right arm, as any thing that my dear young lady left behind her. So I ſewed it in an old glove, and hid it in our thatch to keep for Miſs Livy; but Robert don't know a word about it: for as I ſay he

is a cruel man: and when my young lady died, he moved us from the parifh where I had lived all my days, and brought us here, and took a little farm of neighbour Wingham; but as I was a faying, every thing fell out crofs, and we went to ruin: and fo the farmer came upon us for the rent, and we could not pay him, and fo he took every thing we had, and my poor lady's cloaths, and Mifs Livy's went among the reft. But Robert told the neighbours as how fhe was Willy's child; (my poor fon that her ladyfhip talked about when fhe was dying) but he is dead too now. Ah! poor Willy thou wert a dutiful lad. But he took my lady's death terribly to heart, for it was him that brought her to our houfe, and knew all about her: and Robert was next with him. I believe he was afraid my poor boy would blab fomething about my lady: and fo he got him preffed to go aboard a man of war. And the next news I heard was, that he was dead; but Robert did not care, he was

not his child, he was by my firſt huſband, as good a ſoul as ever ſtepped ſhoe-leather."

Here the loquacious old woman ceaſed, and taking the child on her lap, kiſſed her repeatedly, ſaying, " I love Miſs Livy, as well as if ſhe was my own."

" Can you let us ſee the picture you mentioned," ſaid Lord Wentworth. " That your honor ſhall," replied ſhe eagerly, " and the papers too: for I have been wiſhing a long time to meet with ſome good gentry that would read them: for I don't think I ſhall live long, and I ſhould not die in peace unleſs I did it: for I am ſure, Robert would not care a braſs farthing about Miſs Livy." She quitted the room, and returned in a few moments with the myſterious glove.

Adela opened it, unfolded the papers from the picture, and laid them on the table.

Lord Wentworth took up one of them, and exclaimed, " Merciful Heaven! It is ſo!– It is the well remembered hand of my

long

long loſt ſiſter! Alas! my dear ill-fated Olivia, thou wert adorned with every ſoft attraction to charm the eye and faſcinate the heart; and to what end? Oh! heart rending thought. Only to be the prey of ſome abandoned villain! This! this! was the river that ſwallowed up my unhappy ſiſter."

He laid the paper on the table, he preſſed her orphan to his boſom, he was ſoftened, and the tears fell on her face.

She looked at him earneſtly. "Don't cry ſo much about my Mamma:" ſaid ſhe, "for Grandy always ſay ſhe is gone to live with God Almighty!" This was more then he could bear; he ſtarted from his ſeat, and was about to leave the room. But the picture, which Adela was holding in her hand, while amazement drove the pallid roſes from her cheek, reminded him, that the diſcovery was but half made: ſhe gave it him hiding her face with her handkerchief: he took it eagerly from her, it dropped from his hand to the floor.

He

He ſtood rivetted to the ſpot. At laſt, "Dark! ſmiling! ſerpent!" ſaid he, "Is it thou? thou, whom I have cheriſhed in my boſom, and called by the ſacred title of friend. Ah! what infernal veil haſt thou borrowed to conceal thy guilt, and ſcreen thee thus long from the vengeance of an injured brother? But ſtill thou ſhalt feel it, falſe! falſe! deſtroyer of innocence. Oh! ſhe was moſt lovely! and I will ſend thee to attend her ſhade, or follow it myſelf. Cruel Budenal! thou haſt been the untimely murderer of excellence, rarely equalled in this, or any other age."

"You have ſpoiled this pretty gentleman," ſaid the child, taking up the picture. The fall had really broken the glaſs. Adela took it from her, and folding up the papers, put it with them into her pocket.

"How?" ſaid his lordſhip, "can I reward the goodneſs, the affectionate ſolicitude of this honeſt creature?" turning to the old woman. "Oh! your honor," ſaid ſhe, "I don't deſerve, nor expect any

reward; becaufe your honor ought to have known it before: but indeed, it was not my fault fo much neither: for I never knew who her ladyfhip was, fhe went by the name of Benfly; but fhe told me long enough before fhe died, that it was not her right name, and that her family fhould never hear of her any more, till fhe was laid in her grave; and fo as I told your honor before, the fecret died with my poor Willy. But here comes Robert," exclaimed fhe, looking through the window) " he'll be waundy angry, when he knows what I have done." The old man entered, and after many bows and fcrapes to his guefts, faid to Sarah in a furly tone, " I am ftarved waiting fo long for dinner, why did not you fend Livy to call me?" " In truth," replied fhe, " I have never thought a word about dinner, fince their honors came in: and I have been telling them the whole ftory about our poor lady that's dead, and Mifs Livy: for it has been a load on my confcience a long time."

" Pfha!"

" Pſhaw," ſaid Robert, darting at her a look full of fury, " what art thou taken with a mad fit again?" " I hope," continued he, addreſſing himſelf to Mrs. Delamaine, " your ladyſhip will not take offence at what ſhe ſays, for ſhe is crazy at times." " I crazy!" replied Sarah, " God forbid! But their honors knows better. How can you be ſo wicked, Robert? Ay, ay; you don't know all yet. Why, Miſs Livy is a very great lady, and this grand gentleman here is her own uncle." She laid her hand on the old man's ſhoulder: he made no reply; but putting her from him, looked ſtedfaſtly at her, then at the child, then at Lord Wentworth, and was ſtealing out of the room. But his lordſhip prevented him, ſaying, " Come, we muſt not part ſo. I overlook your concealment of this affair, becauſe the Almighty has deputed you to ſhelter this helpleſs innocent, and I promiſe totally to forget the paſt, and be your friend." The obdurate heart of Robert relented; he could not withſtand ſuch good-

neſs; but falling on his knees,—" Indeed," ſaid he, " I have been a very wicked man, and don't deſerve forgiveneſs. Your honor don't know the worſt of me. I have dared to lift my hand againſt Miſs Livy; often have I done it, and I am ſure, you cannot forgive me." " So honeſt a confeſſion, replied his lordſhip, " is ſurely entitled to pardon; therefore make yourſelf eaſy, with me it is from this moment forgotten."

The old man aroſe, gratitude ſeemed to give him a new exiſtence, it ſoftened his rugged nature, and it is to be hoped improved his heart.

" But what muſt be done with this dear child?" ſaid Lord Wentworth, " ſhe muſt not be left here." " Can your Lordſhip poſſibly be at a loſs?" enquired Mrs. Delamaine. " At Spring-Vale you may aſſure yourſelf ſhe will find a home until we all return to Town. Will you go with me, my pretty Olivia?" continued ſhe. " Yes," returned the child, ſtretching out her hand to Adela, " if this lady lives with you,

I will;

I will; for I love her dearly." "But how"? continued ſhe, recollecting herſelf, "can I leave my Grandy? No, I muſt not go away from her." She withdrew her hand from Adela. "Yes you muſt," ſaid Sarah, taking her in her arms; "you muſt, my dear Miſs Livy. Their honors will be better then I can be to you, and I will come and ſee you to-morrow." "Will you indeed?" returned the child, "well, then I will go with this pretty lady; but be ſure, you come." Sarah repeated her promiſe, again embracing her with tears. Lord Wentworth informed them whom he was; and Adela taking her by the hand, they left the cottage.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. LANCASTER impatiently waiting their return, looked ſurpriſed at ſeeing the little Olivia. But the myſtery was ſoon explained. Adela took from her pocket the picture and the papers.

Mr. Lancaſter ſtarted at ſeeing the portrait of Budenal. Adela ſilently offered a thankſgiving to that Being, who by this timely diſcovery preſerved her from inexpreſſible wretchedneſs.

Again Lord Wentworth attempted to peruſe the myſterious pacquet. He withdrew to a window, and read it through; then giving them to Mrs. Delamaine. "Read them, Madam," ſaid he, "and forgive this obtruſion of my ſorrow. It is involuntary: I will ſee you again before I ſleep. He embraced the child and left them.

Adela requeſted Mrs. Delamaine to ſatisfy their curioſity, by reading the papers.

that

that lay before them: but that lady declaring herſelf unfit for the mournful office. Mr. Lancaſter kindly conſidering the perturbation of Adela's mind, took it upon himſelf.

" To Lord Wentworth,

The cold hand of death is on me. The long expected, wiſhed-for ſummons is at length arrived: and ere my beloved brother receives this pacquet, his once dear Olivia, ſo long ſince mourned, will be mingled with her kindred duſt: and her immortal part purified in the fire of repentance, will ſhe truſts, be admitted into thoſe manſions where the wicked can no more moleſt.

" This joyful hope is as a lamp, which illumines the gloomy cavern that opens to my view, and ſoftens the aſpect of my grim conductor. He ſeems a gentle meſſenger ſent on an errand of love. He points out the way to never ending bliſs. I ſtep for-

forward; but a little ſmiling cherub preſents herſelf to my view, and makes me caſt a longing, lingering look behind. Fain, fain would I ſtay a little longer to guard her infant years from wrong; but it is impoſſible, my thread of life is cut ſhort; and affliction has performed its taſk.

" But I dare not go without removing the myſterious veil which has thus long concealed me from you, and all the world. you have mourned my death with all the tenderneſs of fraternal love. That river which rolls its harmleſs current through Belle-Vue, you have believed to be my grave. Happy deception, I know it all: and never ſhould you be made acquainted with the wretchedneſs of my fate: and the infamy with which I have innocently contaminated your noble blood. Did not maternal affection, and the duty I owe my guiltleſs and unprotected child, call loudly for an explanation. At this moment the lovely innocent ſmiles in my face, and ſeems to beg for juſtice. To you then my bro-

ther

ther I commend her,—Oh! protect her? Guard her from the barbed arrows of villany, that fly so thick around us, and often strike at them who think themselves most secure. Of this truth, I am a melancholy instance. High born, surrounded with affluence, and cheated by the flattering multitude into a belief of possessing unequalled excellence, almost thought myself an angel! Olivia Wentworth was the theme of every British tongue, the toast of every fashionable circle. But yet this angel fell! She dies in a miserable cottage! in the bloom of youth! Unknown! Unfriended! and her untimely grave dug by the bosom friend of her brother! It is,—No,—my hand trembles; the pen refuses to trace his name; but his portrait! which I shall leave with the Mistress of this hovel, will reveal it.

" Wonder! and horror! freezes your blood. Oh! it is a tale replete with guile!

" You remember his first visit at Belle-Vue. From that period, I loved this too

charming

charming man with fondneſs, and with ardour: my mind perpetually dwelt on his image. But the ſecret would have died with me, had he not avowed a flame ardent as my own. You know, he was dependant on a capricious Uncle for every morſel he ate; and dared not to aſk me of my father. Often did he lament his lot, which forbad him to aſpire after ſo bright a prize; but ſoon he diſcovered the true ſtate of my heart: and every morning, when all eyes elſe were locked by ſleep we met in that garden which I called my own: we met,—we owned our mutual paſſion, and mourned its being hopeleſs. At length, a ſummons from his Uncle called him from us. The hidden flame preyed on my heart: the bloom of health forſook my cheeks, and every beholder obſerved the change: It was, you remember, attributed to the illneſs of our ever revered mother. When I attended her to Bath, and in theſe arms ſhe breathed her laſt: in a prayer for you and me, the affliction which then wrung my

heart, almoſt obliterated the recent pangs of love. But ſhort was the triumph: that evening, when at Ranelagh he joined us, revived all. He wrote me the following morning a billet, that breathed the moſt reſpectful tenderneſs. I anſwered it, and a correſpondence commenced; but when I returned to Belle-Vue, it could no longer ſubſiſt without danger of a diſcovery. The diſappointment preyed on my health. A deep melancholy ſeized me. I viſited every walk, where I had been with him: and wept his loſs inceſſantly. During one of my rambles, buried in a deep reverie, ſomething held my gown and prevented my going on; I turned round, it was him whoſe image was employing my thoughts. I ſtarted! and in my ſurpriſe would have fled from him; but he prevented me: he told me he had been at a neighbouring cottage ever ſince I had left London, waiting an opportunity to ſee me. I begged him to leave me. I feared a diſcovery; but inſtead of obeying my injunctions, he threw

himſelf

himſelf at my feet; and vowed never to riſe until I promiſed to be his. This I then refuſed; but aſſured him, I would never be another's, and engaged to ſee him again the next day at the cottage, which was his home. My heart reproached me, the inſtant I left him. A thouſand times I reſolved to break the imprudent promiſe; but what reſolves will ſtand when the heart becomes their opponent. Repeatedly I went to the cottage: and after ſtruggles truly ſevere between duty and inclination, I one night left my father's houſe with him I loved dearer then life: and a chaiſe conveyed us to London.

" The humble owner of the cottage was the only perſon privy to our flight: he thought it a meritorious action to aſſiſt in the cauſe of love. He was ſworn to eternal ſecrecy: and rewarded for it.

" As ſoon as we reached London, we hired lodgings; and the next morning, we were married. For ſome months we lived a life of perfect bliſs: the report of my

being

being drowned in the river, which Willy Saunders had propagated, reached my ears. This was ſoon followed by the death of that Uncle before alluded to. You know what an immenſe fortune it brought to my perfidious partner. I now had every reaſon to expect out marriage would be avowed. My father could not refuſe his forgiveneſs: the idea of my being reſtored from the grave, would facilitate it.

" But ten thouſand excuſes were formed for its delay: till at length I grew uneaſy, and uneaſineſs produced ſuſpicions.

" The behaviour of him I loved, which was often diſtreſſed and embarraſſed, increaſed thoſe ſuſpicions. I determined to write to my father, I did ſo, but received no anſwer.

" I had not ſeen my huſband for ſome days; when one evening I was ſurpriſed at the appearance of our friend the cottager, who delivered me the incloſed letter."

" Be-

" Before my ſtill adored Olivia receives thoſe lines, I ſhall have quitted my native land. I have deferred this dreadful diſcovery till it can be no longer concealed. Your cruel ſolicitude to have our marriage made public, forces me to ſay. It is impoſſible! Ere I beheld you, in a moment of madneſs, I married an infamous woman! who haunts me wherever I go, like an evil ſpirit.

" Forgive me charming, angelic Olivia? I plead no excuſe; but a love, which it was impoſſible to conquer. Your pardon I earneſtly ſolicit lovely, injured excellence! and I beſeech you for the ſake of yourſelf and family, let what is paſt be buried in oblivion? Remain in your preſent habitation. Our honeſt cottager brings you a bill: which will, I hope, ſupply every want until you hear from me again. Adieu! thou beſt of women! May angels watch around you! and haſten the time, when, without fear, I may avow myſelf

Your affectionate huſband."

"Ah! that fatal letter! worn out as I am by ſuffering, and prepared as I thought myſelf to perform this laſt ſad taſk of unfolding my unhappy ſtory, my heart bleeds afreſh!

"Yet, my beloved brother, I conjure you to forbear every thought of revenge. How could I die in peace, if I thought I ſhould add ten-fold miſery to the unhappineſs my errors have already occaſioned you? If I could believe you would ſtain your hand with blood—the blood of my huſband—how could I prevail on myſelf to tell you my tale, even though it be to commit my poor babe to your care? I dare not flatter myſelf my huſband's guilt will go unpuniſhed. But do not you be the avenger. Leave him to the ſcourge of a guilty mind.

"After the receipt of that letter, I ſoon retired to the humble place in which I am now dying, and concealed myſelf under a borrowed name. My child has been my only conſolation, and often has made me forget

that I was unfortunate. Sweet innocent! ſhe now interrogates my countenance with all the anxiety her little heart is capable of. Ah, my love, I leave you!

"These ſentiments are too much for me. Let me conclude. Take my child. And, for my poor unhappy huſband, grant my dying requeſt. Be not his murderer.

"My beloved brother, receive my laſt farewell, and forgive me.

"OLIVIA."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.